SỬ DỤNG TÀI LIỆU ĐÃ QUA ĐIỀU CHỈNH ĐỂ CHUẨN BỊ CHO HỌC SINH KĨ NĂNG ĐỌC HIỂU TRONG KÌ THI TỐT NGHIỆP THPT MÔN TIẾNG ANH: TRẢI NGHIỆM CỦA GIÁO VIÊN

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Tóm tắt: *Nghiên cứu này khám phá trải nghiệm của giáo viên tiếng Anh trong việc sử dụng tài liệu xác thực đã được điều chỉnh nhằm chuẩn bị cho học sinh kĩ năng đọc hiểu trong Kì thi Tốt nghiệp Trung học Phổ thông (TN THPT) môn Tiếng Anh . Nghiên cứu tập trung vào trải nghiệm của giáo viên trong quá trình điều chỉnh tài liệu xác thực và sử dụng các tài liệu này trong giảng dạy kỹ năng đọc hiểu. Với thiết kế nghiên cứu hỗn hợp, dữ liệu được thu thập từ 80 giáo viên trung học phổ thông tại tỉnh Vĩnh Long thông qua bảng hỏi, sau đó là phỏng vấn bán cấu trúc và dự giờ lớp học. Kết quả cho thấy giáo viên có những trải nghiệm tích cực và đồng thuận cao đối với việc tích hợp tài liệu xác thực đã được điều chỉnh vào giảng dạy đọc hiểu, đặc biệt trong giai đoạn ôn tập cho Kì thi Tốt nghiệp Trung học Phổ thông. Giáo viên áp dụng nhiều chiến lược điều chỉnh khác nhau như rút ngắn độ dài văn bản, đơn giản hóa cấu trúc ngữ pháp, thay thế từ vựng khó bằng các từ đồng nghĩa thông dụng, và thiết kế các nhiệm vụ học tập phù hợp với định dạng của đề thi TN THPT môn Tiếng Anh năm 2025. Nghiên cứu cũng chỉ ra rằng các tài liệu này được sử dụng ở tất cả các giai đoạn của tiết đọc, bao gồm trước khi đọc, trong khi đọc và sau khi đọc, nhằm giúp học sinh làm quen với các đặc điểm ngôn ngữ tự nhiên và phát triển các chiến lược đọc hiểu. Cuối cùng, nghiên cứu đưa ra một số đề xuất về sự cần thiết của việc bồi dưỡng chuyên môn trong điều chỉnh tài liệu, đầu tư cơ sở hạ tầng số, nâng cao năng lực chuyên môn của giáo viên, và tăng cường sự hợp tác giữa giáo viên trong việc xây dựng nguồn tài liệu xác thực đã được điều chỉnh nhằm giảm khối lượng công việc và nâng cao chất lượng giảng dạy.*

Từ khóa*: tài liệu thực đã được điều chỉnh, kĩ năng đọc hiểu, giáo viên Tiếng Anh, Kì thi Tốt nghiệp Trung học phổ thông môn Tiếng Anh*

USING ADAPTED AUTHENTIC MATERIALS TO PREPARE STUDENTS FOR READING COMPREHENSION IN THE NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION ENGLISH EXAMINATION: EFL TEACHERS' EXPERIENCES

Abstract: *This study investigates EFL teachers' experiences of using adapted authentic materials to prepare students for reading comprehension in the National High School Graduation English Examination (NHSGEE). This study focuses on teachers' experiences of adapting authentic materials and using adapted authentic materials in reading instruction. With a mixed-methods research design, data were collected from 80 high school teachers in Vinh Long province, through questionnaires, followed by semi-structured interviews and classroom observations. The findings revealed that teachers had highly positive experiences and strong agreement with the integration of adapted authentic materials into reading instruction, especially in the period of preparation for the NHSGEE. Teachers employ various adaptation strategies such as shortening the text length, simplifying grammatical structures, replacing difficult vocabulary with common synonyms, and designing tasks aligned with the 2025 NHSGEE format. The research indicated that these materials were used across all lesson stages, including pre-, while-, and post-reading stages, to enhance students' familiarity with natural language patterns and practical reading strategies. The study concludes with pedagogical implications, emphasizing the necessity for professional training on material adaptation, investment in digital infrastructure, teachers' proficiency improvement, and teachers' collaboration in building collections of adapted authentic materials to reduce workload and improve instructional quality.*

Keywords*: adapted authentic materials, reading comprehension, EFL teachers, the National High School Graduation English Examination (NHSGEE)*

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I. INTRODUCTION

English is a global language used in business, technology, research, diplomacy, and education, and strong English competence provides access to knowledge and career opportunities (Crystal, 2003; Phuong & Vo, 2024). Among the four language skills, reading is especially important because it provides rich linguistic input, develops vocabulary and grammar, and enhances critical thinking and intercultural knowledge (Anderson, 2003; Zhang, 2016). In Vietnam, where opportunities for real-life communication are limited, reading becomes a key source of English input and is particularly important for success in the NHSGEE.

Under the 2018 General Education Curriculum, students are expected to develop communicative competence and reach Level 3 of the VFLCF

by the end of high school (MOET, 2018). The 2025 NHSGEE includes 40 multiple-choice questions, with 18 questions based on two reading passages, making reading comprehension a major component of the exam (Cao et al., 2026).

To meet curriculum standards and support students' exam preparation, teachers need effective reading instruction strategies. Adapted authentic materials are considered a useful solution because they expose students to real-life language while matching their proficiency levels and examination needs. However, research on teachers' experiences of adapting and using authentic materials in the context of high-stakes examinations remains limited. Therefore, this study investigates EFL teachers' experiences in adapting authentic materials and using them to prepare students for NHSGEE reading comprehension.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Authentic materials

Authentic materials are real-life materials not originally created for language teaching purposes (Nunan, 1989; Gilmore, 2007; Tomlinson, 2001). They include texts, audio, visuals, and multimedia resources such as newspapers, magazines, songs, brochures, menus, films, and online content, and they help learners become familiar with natural language use and real-life communication (Gower et al., 2005; Berardo, 2006). In this study, authentic materials are defined as texts, audio, and visual materials taken from real-life situations or social contexts to support language learning and build background knowledge.

Authentic materials can be classified into printed materials, audio materials, and visual materials (Oura, 2001; Truong & Thai, 2025). For this study, the focus is on printed materials (articles, newspapers, magazines, books), audio materials (podcasts, conversations, speeches, lectures), and visual materials (images, pictures, videos).

When selecting authentic materials for reading instruction, teachers should consider relevance, authenticity, comprehensibility, readability, and suitability for students' proficiency levels and instructional objectives (Gebhard, 1989; Nuttall, 1996). Effective materials should reflect real-life language use while remaining accessible and useful for classroom learning.

2.2. Adapted authentic materials

Adapted authentic materials are real-life texts that have been modified to suit learners' needs, proficiency levels, and instructional goals. Material adaptation involves changing, simplifying, shortening, or reorganizing authentic materials to make them more appropriate for the teaching context (Tomlinson & Masuhara, 2004; Murray & Christison, 2011). Teachers may remove difficult vocabulary, simplify tasks, or adjust content to match students' language ability (Lambert, 2011). Because authentic materials may contain unfamiliar language, unsuitable content, or tasks that do not fit classroom practice, adaptation strategies such as expanding, omitting, modifying, simplifying, and reordering materials are often necessary (McDonough et al., 2013). In this study, adapted authentic materials refer to real-life texts or social media materials that are shortened and simplified by teachers to support students' reading comprehension through meaningful and contextualized language use and appropriate reading tasks.

2.3. Reading comprehension

Reading comprehension is widely viewed as an interactive and constructive process in which readers build meaning by combining information from the text with their prior knowledge, experiences, and personal perspectives (Grabe, 2009; Pardo, 2004). Readers use background knowledge and appropriate reading strategies to interpret the message of the text (Nguyen & Nguyen, 2017). From a constructivist perspective, learners actively construct meaning and develop greater independence as readers (Hong & Nguyen, 2019). In this study, reading comprehension refers to the process of understanding written symbols and the meanings of words, sentences, paragraphs, and their relationships by using background knowledge and personal experience.

Reading comprehension is influenced by many factors, including vocabulary, grammar, background knowledge, reading fluency, reading strategies, motivation, anxiety, text complexity, and environmental conditions (Grabe, 2009; Gilakjani & Sabouri, 2016). Taladngoen et al. (2020) also highlight the effects of stress, concentration, and learners' effort during reading. In the Vietnamese context, students often struggle with vocabulary, grammar, unfamiliar topics, and certain question types such as true/false items, sentence completion, and multiple-choice questions (To & Khau, 2022). Overall, effective reading comprehension depends on the integration

of linguistic knowledge, cognitive skills, and affective factors.

2.4. The National High School Graduation English Examination (NHSGEE)

In Vietnam, the National High School Graduation Examination (NHSGEE) is a high-stakes exam that determines both high school graduation and university admission opportunities (Tong & Pham, 2024; Nguyen & Dao, 2025). Under the 2018 General Education Curriculum, English teaching focuses on four themes: our life, society and social issues, environment and heritage preservation, and our future and education.

The 2025 NHSGEE includes six sections, with the reading component consisting of two passages and 18 multiple-choice questions. Common question types include main idea, detailed information, inference, vocabulary in context, synonym/antonym, reference, paraphrasing, sentence insertion, summary, author's purpose, and text organization. Performance in reading comprehension has a significant effect on students' overall examination scores (Cao et al., 2026).

2.5. Teachers' experiences

Teachers' experiences include both personal learning and professional teaching experiences, which shape their knowledge, beliefs, and classroom practices (Lemus-Hidalgo, 2017). They also involve the reflections and decisions teachers develop through practice (Pebriantini et al., 2024). Such experiences help teachers evaluate effective teaching methods, identify challenges, and adjust instructional strategies to meet learners' needs (Farrell & Kennedy, 2019). In Vietnam, EFL teachers' experiences are influenced by educational policies, classroom realities, professional identity, and sociocultural factors (Trinh et al., 2025). Overall, teachers' experiences are continuously constructed through learning, practice, and reflection, and they strongly influence instructional decisions and teaching practices.

2.6. Washback effect

Washback effect refers to the influence that examinations have on teaching and learning (Alderson & Wall, 1993; Bailey, 1996). It may affect curriculum, teaching methods, learning activities, and students' attitudes (Cheng, 2005).

Washback can be positive or negative. Positive washback encourages effective teaching and learning and motivates teachers and students to achieve educational goals (Alderson & Wall, 1993; Peason, 1988). Negative washback may lead to a narrow curriculum, excessive focus on test-taking skills, reduced communicative language practice, and increased stress for teachers and students (Bailey, 1996; Shohamy, 1993).

In the context of the NHSGEE, washback strongly influences classroom instruction and student learning (Nguyen & Dao, 2025). The exam provides direction and motivation for achieving high scores and pursuing higher education. However, it also encourages teachers to focus mainly on grammar, vocabulary, and reading skills, often at the expense of communicative teaching, which may reduce alignment with the communicative objectives of the curriculum (Tong & Pham, 2024).

III. METHODOLOGY

This study employed a mixed-methods design using a questionnaire, semi-structured interviews, and classroom observations. It was conducted in the second semester of the 2025–2026 academic year at high schools in Vinh Long province. A total of 80 EFL teachers from 32 high schools were selected through purposive sampling (Fraenkel et al., 2012). Participants were chosen because they were preparing students for the NHSGEE, using adapted authentic materials in reading instruction, and voluntarily agreeing to participate in the research. After the survey, six teachers were invited for interviews and classroom observations.

IV. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Findings from the questionnaire

Questionnaire results showed that teachers had positive experiences using adapted authentic materials in teaching reading comprehension for the NHSGEE, consistent with previous studies (Akbari & Razavi, 2016; Rehman & Perveen, 2021). Teachers believed these materials helped improve students' reading comprehension and strongly supported their integration into reading instruction.

Teachers also expressed strong agreement with adaptation strategies such as simplifying language, shortening texts, and designing exam-oriented tasks. This reflects the washback effect of the NHSGEE, which influences curriculum planning, material design, teaching methods, and assessment (Sukyadi & Mardiani, 2011; Tong & Pham, 2024). Teachers therefore tried to balance students' proficiency levels with examination requirements.

4.2. Findings from semi-structured interviews

Interviews revealed that teachers used various strategies to adapt authentic materials, including shortening texts, simplifying grammar, replacing difficult vocabulary, adding glossaries, and creating NHSGEE-style tasks. These strategies helped make authentic texts more accessible and effective for students (McDonough et al., 2013).

Teachers also reported that technology and AI tools were useful for selecting and adapting materials, but all AI-generated content had to be carefully reviewed and revised by teachers. AI was viewed as a supportive resource rather than a replacement for teachers' professional judgment (Li & Xu, 2021; Nguyen et al., 2025).

Adapted authentic materials were used frequently, especially during exam preparation periods. Teachers often supplemented textbook passages with outside reading materials on similar topics to provide students with more exposure to real-life language and exam-oriented practice (Berardo, 2006; Assiddiq, 2019).

Most materials were taken from online written sources, while audio-visual materials were mainly used for warm-up activities and activating background knowledge. Teachers preferred printed authentic texts with practical and exam-related topics because they were more suitable for developing reading skills and preparing students for the NHSGEE (Rusmawaty et al., 2018).

Finally, teachers integrated adapted authentic materials across all reading stages: pre-reading (activating background knowledge and vocabulary), while-reading (practicing skimming, scanning, summarizing, and paraphrasing), and post-reading (summarizing and connecting texts to real life). This helped students become more familiar with authentic language use and develop flexible reading strategies required for the NHSGEE.

4.3. Findings from the observations

Classroom observations showed that all six teachers used adapted authentic materials in the pre-, while-, and post-reading stages to support reading comprehension. In the pre-reading stage, teachers used audio, visual, and printed materials to activate background knowledge and pre-teach key vocabulary. During the while- and post-reading stages, teachers combined bottom-up processing (vocabulary and grammar) with top-down processing (summarizing, arranging sentences, and identifying text logic). Most class time was devoted to practice, answer explanation, and reading strategies, helping students become familiar with NHSGEE question types and reducing exam anxiety.

Teachers selected materials on socially and globally relevant topics such as social media, cybersecurity, health, tourism, and environmental issues. These materials helped bridge the gap between textbook content and NHSGEE requirements while increasing students' engagement. Teachers also encouraged students to relate the texts to real-life experiences and justify their answers, which supported the development of critical thinking and deeper reading comprehension.

The use of Vietnamese for explanations and feedback showed that teachers prioritized clarity and comprehension, particularly when teaching exam-related strategies. This can be seen as evidence of the washback effect of the NHSGEE, as instruction was partly shaped by the need to ensure students fully understood key concepts and examination techniques.

4.4. Discussion in relation to the conceptual framework

The findings support the conceptual framework combining teachers' experiences and the washback effect of the NHSGEE. Teachers used various adaptation strategies and AI-supported tools to select materials aligned with the MOET 2018 Curriculum and NHSGEE topics, and to design exam-format questions. This reflects a positive washback effect, encouraging teachers to adapt materials and lesson plans to students' needs and examination requirements.

At the same time, evidence of negative washback was found. Teachers tended to emphasize multiple-choice practice and exam strategies rather than communicative language use, and Vietnamese was frequently used to explain exam-related content. These results suggest that using adapted authentic materials places additional professional demands on teachers and that further support is needed to balance communicative language development with effective preparation for the high-stakes NHSGEE.

V. PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1. Implications for EFL teachers

EFL teachers should continue using adapted authentic materials to improve students' vocabulary, background knowledge, and reading

comprehension for the NHSGEE. Materials should match students' proficiency and exam requirements, with strategies such as simplifying language, shortening texts, and using scaffolded tasks. Teachers should also teach key reading skills (skimming, scanning, inferring, paraphrasing), use technology and AI tools to support material adaptation, collaborate in building shared material banks, and participate in professional development activities.

5.2. Implications for students

Students should actively engage with adapted authentic materials, as they support NHSGEE preparation and connect classroom learning with real-life contexts. They are encouraged to build vocabulary and background knowledge through additional reading from reliable newspapers, magazines, and books, and develop a regular reading habit to improve language acquisition and exam performance.

5.3. Implications for school administrators

School administrators should provide training on material adaptation, technology, and AI tools, encourage collaboration among EFL teachers, and invest in digital infrastructure and technological resources to support the effective integration of adapted authentic materials and AI-assisted teaching.

VI. CONCLUSION

The findings show that EFL teachers had positive experiences using adapted authentic materials to prepare students for NHSGEE reading comprehension. These materials exposed students to meaningful real-life language while remaining suitable for their proficiency levels and examination requirements. Teachers' adaptation practices also reflected the positive washback of the NHSGEE, as they modified texts and designed exam-oriented tasks to support students' academic goals. Using adapted authentic materials across all reading stages helped students develop reading skills and connect classroom learning with real-life contexts. Overall, the study suggests that teachers, students, and school administrators should work together to improve the effective use of adapted authentic materials in reading instruction and NHSGEE preparation.

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