

THE USE OF AUTHENTIC MATERIALS IN ENHANCING LISTENING COMPREHENSION

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Abstract

This study is dedicated to investigating the use of authentic materials in the development of listening comprehension skills. Listening is very often considered the most difficult language skill to learn, while being a basic one in terms of communication. For one, the audio materials that accompany most traditional textbooks are often unnatural in terms of rhythm and speed and are built on poorer lexical options than what one would find in actual speech. This is another subject-matter gap between what is learned inside the classroom and the real-world context. The main objective of the research will be to establish the effectiveness of authentic materials such as news broadcasts, YouTube videos, films, podcasts, and songs on students' development of listening competence. It was conducted on a survey of 33 English language learners. The instruments of research used were a questionnaire that aimed to determine the type of authentic material used, how frequently they were used, how useful they were, and how they influenced the learners' motivation. The results indicated that the most significant advantage, by far, is that authentic materials greatly assist in the development of the learners' aural comprehension skills, together with a sense of correct, natural pronunciation. Further, such material proved a very powerful catalyst in motivating students and therefore raising overall interest in the process of language learning. Some impediments appeared, though: fast speech rates and lexical barriers sometimes were not easy to overcome, especially by beginner students. The researcher was therefore able to conclude that authentic materials can play a crucial role both for advancing students' listening level as well as for preparing students for real-life conversations while at the same time promoting student engagement. Following this trend, it can therefore be recommended that English language teachers should incorporate authentic material systematically and at the students' level while at the same time using supporting activities to promote better understanding.

Key words: authentic materials, listening comprehension, English language learning, motivation, real life communication, classroom practice, language proficiency

Introduction

In today's world English is the most important language for global communication. The language learning process is evolving globally with the help of technology and real-life materials. In the process of learning foreign languages four main language skills are connected each other like a chain: reading, writing, speaking and listening. Among the four language skills listening is frequently described as the most challenging for learners. Unfortunately, it is often neglected in classrooms overshadowed by the focus on grammar rules and speaking exercises.

Listening difficulties are caused by speech speed, pronunciation differences, new vocabulary words, and phonetic noise. Yet, in real life situations listening is actually the main of all communication. In real communicative contexts students often experience considerable difficulties in understanding spoken English. The pronunciation and audio materials presented in modern texts are not possible to resemble the rhythm, pace, and vocabulary of real-life spoken conversation. This has presented learners with problems in comprehending spoken dialogue in the English language. Therefore, using authentic materials and audios prepare students for understanding the real life communications, enhance their listening comprehension and also builds practical communication skills.

Authentic materials are resources that were not specifically created for language teaching, but are used by native speakers' real life situations. Authentic materials help learners study the language within a natural context. While textbooks provide a safe, structured materials, authentic materials offer real communications.

The scientific significance of this research resides in its comprehensive analysis of the theoretical and practical aspects of using authentic materials in developing listening comprehension. The study explores the types of authentic materials, their impact on the listening process and the possibilities for their integration into the educational process. The findings of this research enrich the methodology of foreign language teaching and contribute to the further development of exciting theoretical perspectives on listening comprehension. The findings contribute to the enrichment of foreign language teaching methodology and serve to further advance exciting theoretical frameworks regarding listening proficiency. Additionally, this work systemizes previous scholarship on the use of authentic materials helping in formulation of comprehensive scientific comprehension.

Literature review:

As Richards (2008) points out, we spend nearly half of our daily communication time just listening to others. If a learner cannot decode the sounds and grasp the speaker's meaning, the entire communication cycle simply breaks down, making genuine interactions impossible. Therefore, listening is an active process because it involves speaker's accent, pronunciation, grammar and vocabulary. It means that before talking or doing other physical activities and when they are reading, talking, they must listen to get information and knowledge. (Dewi,2018).

In traditional language learning audio materials consists of artificially created vocabulary and it is specifically designed for textbooks. These kind of materials are grammatically correct and easy to understand but non-authentic materials cannot reflect real life communication and speech. Consequently, even if learners are able to understand the materials which are given in classroom, they struggle to comprehend natural native speech in authentic contexts, and real life speech. This affects students' final score in passing exams. When a researcher did a macro teaching found out that there were some students' problems in listening comprehension. The first reason the researcher chose this title because the students had difficulties in learning listening comprehension. Their scores do not achieve Minimum Passing Grade (MGP). The problem arose because without listening comprehension, oral communication cannot run well (Dewi,2018).

Using authentic materials is being regarded as an important way to overcome this challenge. One of the main advantages of using original material is encountering students in

realistic situations and showing how it is used in everyday life. Through authentic materials learners study how to pronounce the words, intonation, speech rate, accents and real life units. This improves listening comprehension and also it affects other three skills. Therefore, using authentic materials in classroom teaching enhances learners' interest to the lessons and it encourages learners practicing more. According to Kelly, Kelly, Offiner & Vorland (2002) believe that authentic materials are useful media, which can be used to relate between classroom and the real world. Authentic materials help to give motivation the students learn the language, and they felt that they are learning the real language (Guariento & Morely, 2001).

Authentic materials are resources utilized in the foreign language teaching process that were not specifically created for didactic purposes. But these are instead used by native speakers in real life contexts as natural means of communication. Such materials expose learners to genuine contextual and functional application of the language. Authentic materials are materials made by native speakers that can be used in teaching and learning process but not purely designed for teaching (Dewi, 2018). For authentic listening tasks, contexts can be taken from different real-world sources, such as podcasts, TV shows, voice mails and messages (Chorieva, 2025). As for Husnawati, Puspitasari & Yundayani authentic materials are resources not specifically designed for language learning, often delivered through technology such as computers, tapes, videos, and TV. The aim of these materials is to recreate an environment for learners to cope with outside the learning setting. Some examples of authentic materials include movies, advertisements, magazines, among many more. EFL setting entails a whole different ball game following the usage of authentic materials. Learners can cope better with motivation via proficiency (Treve, 2023). It is popularly believed that authentic materials benefit the learner's motivation through the display of communicative situations in real language, providing authentic cultural information, along with experiencing the emotions that enable one to gain confidence (Kulakhmetova and Daulbaeva, 2024). A significant effect of authentic materials has been seen on language use and proficiency as it exposes the students to real discourse and closely relates to the needs of the learners with a creative approach (Danansooriya, 2022). Further, the authentic materials encompass rich vocabulary and allow students to efficiently benefit from the useful words naturally and good grammar knowledge (Sadam, 2022).

In contemporary language learning, language study materials play a key part because they link language learning and classroom study with real language, and therefore real life usage as well. The language students meet through study materials is real as opposed to textbook language which is often simplified and unnatural. Empirical studies have shown the significant effects of using authentic texts by language learners in teaching learning process. Besides that, some other researchers have done research that using authentic materials has significant influence in improving reading comprehension by presenting expressions and new words to students (Bacon

& Finneman, 1990; Berardo, 2006). Time in class is limited. Teachers' teaching is just one of the learning resources for the students. Teachers should raise students' cultural awareness, and encourage them to learn the target culture by themselves (Mallapiang, 2014). Empirical studies have shown the significant effects of using authentic texts by language learners in teaching learning process. The teachers can use the authentic material as additional material to develop the overall skills of the learners' learning. With the help of the authentic material, the

teachers can reinforce the learning items and can give additional tasks to the learners. Furthermore, these authentic materials create interest among the learners since the teachers select them with proper care by taking the needs and interests of the learners (Abidjanova, 2024).

Methodology

The aim of this study is to investigate the impact of using authentic materials on students' listening comprehension. Adopting a quantitative approach, the research utilized a survey consisting of closed-ended questions as the primary data collection instrument. This design was selected to allow for the analysis of respondents' opinions and experiences through numerical data. The research examined the current state of the phenomena without experimental intervention.

The target audience of this study consists of University students who are currently learning English as a language (EFL). The reason for choosing a quantitative approach is the ability to analyse students' attitudes towards to authentic materials, their effectiveness. This approach promote an objective evaluation of the research results and helps to identify general trends. In total 33 undergraduate students participated in the research. The participants accounts for different age groups and their proficiency levels: beginner, intermediate, and advanced. The research was conducted within an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) context. In order to determine the students' attitude towards to authentic materials, a closed-ended questions was used. The survey questions included the following aspects:

- Familiarity: Awareness of the concept of authentic materials.
- Frequency: How often these materials used in classroom lessons.
- Perceived effectiveness: The effect of these materials on improving listening comprehension.
- Student engagement: Interest levels using real world contexts versus traditional textbooks.

Listening comprehension skills was evaluated based on authentic audio and video materials. The result of the respondents' self-assessment served as a basis for measuring effectiveness of these materials in classroom learning. An online questionnaire was used as the primary instrument for data collection. The survey was developed using the Google Forms platform and consists of 11 closed-ended questions. The survey was organized outside of class hours, and the purpose of the research was explained to students. The questions were designed using multiple choice format and all responses were collected anonymously. The questionnaire specially aimed to assess the frequency of authentic material usage, the perceived impact of these materials on listening comprehension, and the level of student motivation resulting from their use.

The gathered data was processed using descriptive statistical analysis. The results were analysed based on percentages and frequency determine correlation between authentic usage and listening comprehension. To enhance clarity, findings were visually represented through graphical representations and diagrams. The survey questions were developed based on similar instruments widely used in EFL research. To ensure validity and reliability of the data the questions were pre-tested to minimize potential measurement errors. The study was strictly maintained ethical standards. The personal data of participants was secured, their gathered information was obtained and the data was used exclusively for scientific.

Results

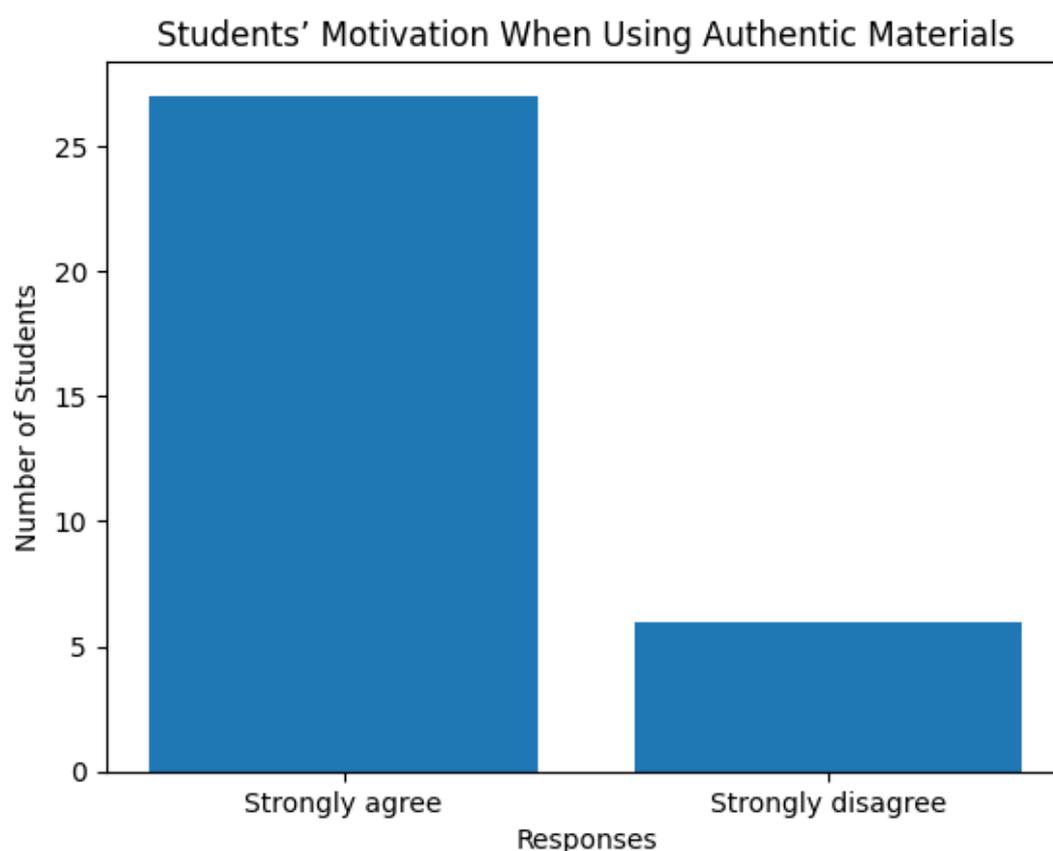
This section includes the findings of the study, which focused on examining the effectiveness of authentic materials in improving listening comprehension for learning English as a foreign language. Learning. It is found from the survey that students’ knowledge, utilisation level, and beliefs concerning authentic materials for English classes are depicted using percentages. From the analysis of all answers, it would appear that the findings outline different levels of exposure to authentic materials, and perceptions of their effect on listening comprehension or pronunciation in a real situation. Additionally, answers regarding authentic materials used, speed of speech, and learner’s motivation were all portrayed in a quantitative manner.

Table 1

No	Questions	Answers	Numbers	Percentage
1.	Age	19-22	21	63.6%
2.	English proficiency level	Intermediate	20	60.6%
3.	Are you familiar with the term “authentic materials”?	Yes	24	72.7%
4.	How often are authentic materials used in your English class?	Always	14	42.4%
5.	Which types of authentic materials have you used in class?	YouTube videos	14	42.4%
6.	Authentic materials help improve my listening skills.	Agree	15	45.5%
7.	Authentic audio/video materials help me understand real-life pronunciation better.	Agree	20	60.6%
8.	The speed of speech in authentic listening is:	Moderate	24	72.7%
9.	Using authentic materials increase my motivation to learn English.	Strongly agree	27	81.8%
10.	Compared to textbook materials, authentic materials are:	More effective	20	60.6%
11.	Authentic materials should be used more frequently in English classes	Yes	27	81.85%

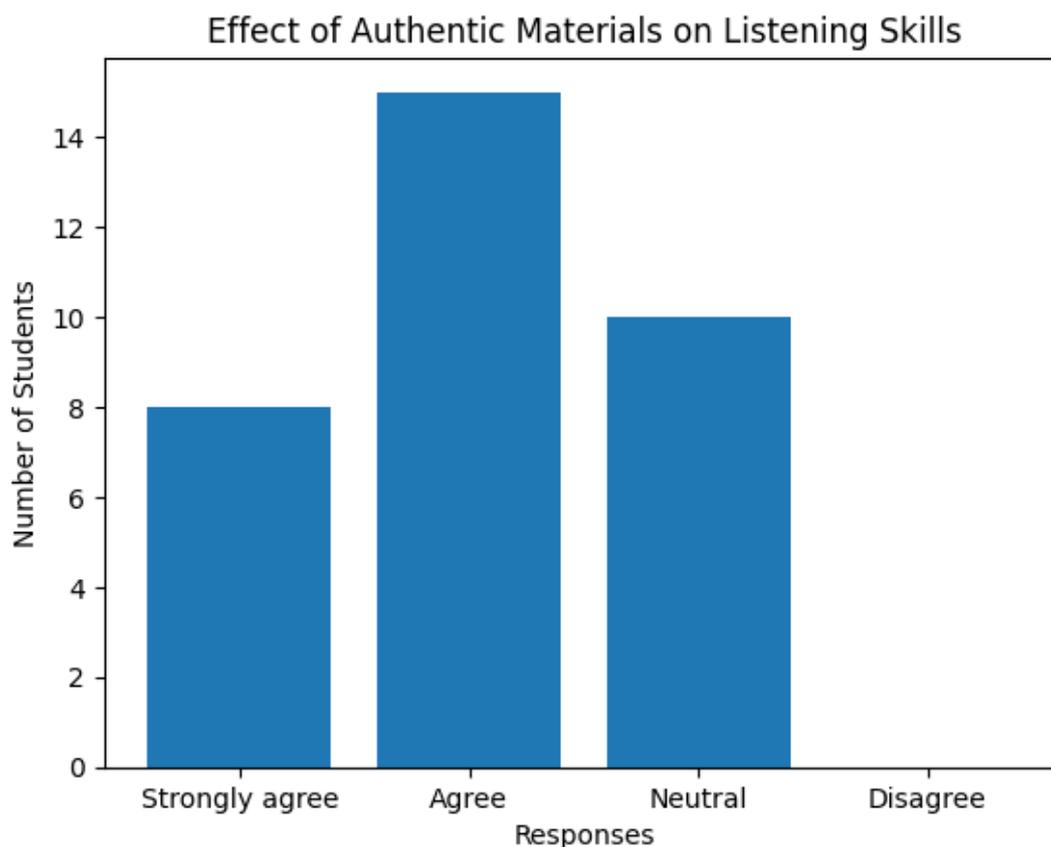
The table shows the responses received from students regarding their thoughts about using real-world items and experiences for learning English. A large percentage of those who answered were 19-22 years old (63.59%), while most students considered their English Level to be Intermediate (60.58%). Of those surveyed, 72.67% indicated that they had knowledge of the term authentic materials. Also, almost all student participants (over 42%) indicated that authentic materials were always used in their English language course. Of these students, more than 42% indicated that YouTube Videos were the most often-utilised form of authentic

material within their classes. Also, results showed that using authentic materials has a positive relationship in developing learners, listening comprehension skills. 45.5% of participants felt that authentic materials contributed positively to their ability to listen. About 60.6% of respondents noted that using authentic audio and video materials enables them to understand the pronunciation of words as they are naturally pronounced in everyday life. With respect to level of difficulty, the majority (72.7%) of participants felt that the speech rate of authentic listening materials was at an average level. Motivation results were similarly high, with an overwhelming majority (81.8%) of respondents strongly agreeing that using authentic materials increases their motivation to learn English. A large majority (60.6%) of the students also believe that authentic materials are a more effective tool for studying English than traditional textbooks. As the final results indicate, 81.85% of participants stated that authentic materials should be used more frequently in English classes.



Graph 2. Students' motivation when using authentic materials.

According to the survey, out of 33 total respondents, 27 responded strongly support, which accounts for around 81.8%, whereas six respondents (approximately 18.2%) strongly disagree. With this data we can conclude that authentic material contributes greatly to students' motivation to learn English.



Graph 3. Survey results.

The response from the participant group to this research question indicated that over half (45.5%) of the participant group (15 of 33) believed that authentic materials help improve Listening Comprehension. Also, 8 participants (24.2%) agreed strongly with the statement. On the other hand, 10 of the participants (30.30%) neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement. None of the 33 participants disagreed with the statement, Therefore, the overall trend shows that authentic materials positively affect students' listening comprehension and help students to better understand spoken words as they occur in their daily lives.

Discussion

The research outcomes reveal that authentic materials also serve an important role in fostering linguistic proficiency and learning motivation among ESL/EFL students. The original research hypothesis, Authentic materials enhance both students' linguistic competence and learning motivation has been supported empirically from data collected. Contrary to textbooks used for language classes, real-life videos and songs help students view language as a "living" material rather than as a set of abstract rules. Phonetic Adaptation: Within phonetics, there was understanding of how real-life pronunciations are improving among the students, as indicated by 60.6%, thus verifying that real-life materials are of utmost significance in adapting to various kinds of pronunciations and rates of delivering messages. On the other hand, there's also understanding of how real-life pronunciations have caused challenges, as indicated by 24.3%, verifying the significance of scaffolding and selecting real-life study materials. This is supported by the research findings of prominent international research theorists such as Gilmore (2007) and Berardo (2006), who contend that studying authentic materials equips learners with appropriate skills in communication. On an even more intriguing note, it was estimated in the course of carrying out the study that a majority of the participants (42.4%) preferred listening

to songs more than other types of media. This is an indication of another new hypothesis that audio-aesthetic types of media may be more learner-friendly and less intimidating than visual types of media like news reports and videos on YouTube. Moreover, data reinforce that an urgent need exists for curriculum change. Textbook-based materials alone can cause "cultural and linguistic shock" when exposed to spoken language. Therefore, the teaching staff must aim to spend no less than 20–30% of their time on genuine materials. Gradual integration is advised to progress gradually from basic songs and videos from social media to complex news broadcasts and songs.

Conclusion

The primary aim of this study was to investigate the development of listening comprehension skills with the help of authentic materials. The findings from the study revealed that there was an improvement in listening skills for the majority of the students when they utilized authentic sources. Challenges identified by the study: Some of the aspects with which a majority of the study participants faced a challenge while dealing with authentic sources included its complexity, variations in dialects or pronunciation differences, fast speech rates and others. "The use of authentic materials effectively enhances listening comprehension skills" this statement has been suggested to be strongly confirmed. This is because a great number of students indicated their perceived improvement in listening skills. The findings also confirm once again that authentic materials can play two important roles, firstly as an important means of enhancing the technical skill of listening for comprehension and, secondly, as a means of increasing the motivational levels and practical communication skills of the students. Based on this, from a practical point of view, it is recommended to incorporate the use of authentic materials in the classroom regularly, catering to the level of the students' proficiency. In order to create a link between learning in the classroom and learning in the "real world" beyond the classroom, it is also recommended to incorporate support work, which might involve Q&A, discussions, interviews, etc., to successfully enhance the understanding of the student regarding the context of natural conversation. The outcome of future studies might also lead to an exploration of the more successful use of authentic materials based on the level of the students' proficiency and the educational context. Thus, finally, it is said, "The use of authentic materials successfully develops listening skills, prepares learners for the 'real world' beyond the language classroom, and also boosts learners' motivation." Therefore, a more open and methodologically enhanced standpoint of authentic materials in the language learning procedure is highly advisable.

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