

USING AUTHENTIC MATERIALS TO IMPROVE LISTENING SKILL IN EFL CLASSES: A STUDY OF UZBEK LEARNERS

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ABSTRACT

The importance of listening skill in language learning in EFL (English as a Foreign Language) classes is demonstrated in the paper. The relationship between listening comprehension and authentic materials is vital while learning any language especially English. The authentic materials effect on student's knowledge, motivation and understanding the context. In this article the theories and opinions of the researchers in this field were mentioned. This paper is also provided with a survey participation of experienced teachers in different types of education settings. The teachers have various students who are in every level of learning English including beginner, elementary, intermediate, upper-intermediate, and advanced. According to their teaching experience, they fulfilled the survey and supplied personal thought about using authentic materials in the classroom. The results are explained and visualized in order to improve clarification. Furthermore, they are compared with previous researches, and views of scholars. Finally, the future recommendation is provided.

Key words: listening comprehension, authentic materials, language learning, teachers, learners, EFL instruction

Introduction

It is known that Listening is one of the most challenging skills for EFL (English as a Foreign Language) students. It is not only about hearing non-native language, but also understanding the meaning without a scripted version of the speech in real time. Unfamiliar context, fast speech rate, limited vocabulary, lack of practice with native speakers, not being aware of cultural background can make difficulties for learners of English. Almost every EFL teacher uses recorded audio materials that are unnatural and not suitable outside the classrooms in Uzbekistan. On the one hand, they may ease the learning process as they are accessible. There are several course books specially made with its student's book, Teacher's book, Workbook, and evaluation tests. Everyone is able to buy at book shops or download their PDF version and recorded materials on the internet. Furthermore, while recording specialists try to speak more louder, slowly, using the word suitable for target level and without cultural contexts. This can impact positively on language learning as students can understand the records effortlessly. Absence of outer noise is another good side of recorded versions due to conducting a silent environment with only supposed voice. Students can focus on listening recordings and understand better when unnecessary voice is removed. On the other hand, overconfidence in non-original recordings can impair learners' ability to develop effective listening strategies. Learners can rely on understanding at the surface level instead of practicing skills such as anticipating meanings, dealing with language quickly, or retrieving information from context. This lack of authenticity may reduce learners' motivation and engagement, as students struggle

to see the practical value of such materials in real-life communication (Harmer, 2007). Therefore, students can perform well on textbook-based listening tasks, but suffer significantly when exposed to authentic spoken English. Thus, while non-native subjects may be useful at the beginner level, their limitations make them less effective in developing the complex auditory comprehension skills required for EFL education. In recent years, the use of authentic materials in foreign language education has received increasing attention. Authentic materials are audio and video resources that were originally created for real communication purposes rather than language teaching, including podcasts, news reports, interviews, and professional videos (Gilmore, 2007). Such materials teach students to use natural language, realistic pronunciation, and meaningful communication contexts, which can increase student motivation and engagement in the listening process (Harmer, 2007). Studies have also shown that authentic material helps students develop effective listening strategies and improve understanding by reducing the gap between classroom teaching and real language use (Nunan, 1999).

Literature-review

Despite the alleged benefits of the original material, the effectiveness of EFL listening lessons still requires further empirical research, especially through comparative research designs. Regarding ESP education in Uzbekistan, some local researchers have highlighted the positive role of authentic materials in the development of listening skills (Saparova, 2025; Mirzaboboyeva & Normuminov, 2025). Therefore, the purpose of this study is to compare the auditory comprehension performance of ESP students who are taught with authentic materials with those who are not taught with authentic textbook-based materials. By providing the same hearing comprehension test for both groups, the study attempted to determine whether the original material led to better listening outcomes in ESP classes. Currently, audio materials have been widely used to teach zeros, but researchers pay special attention to some limitations and negative aspects of pseudo-recording materials. Gilmore (2007) notes that artificially recorded material does not adequately reflect the frequency, relaxation, tension, and spontaneity of actual speech. As a result, students are unable to adapt to typical language patterns in a real professional environment. In addition, Richards (2001) notes that similar materials recorded often contain simplified vocabulary and grammatical structures. For students studying zero, this situation is problematic. Because in the future, we will have to work with complex terms and natural languages. Artificial materials, on the other hand, do not fully meet the requirements for real speech in professional communication. In addition, Vedovson (1998) argued that these materials have a limited impact on the development of communication illiteracy. Conversations recorded on fake material are pre-planned and do not contain unexpected real questions, meaningless phrases and speech errors. This impairs students' ability to listen, understand and adapt to real situations. It also shows that using only non-authentic audio materials in class reduces students' motivation. Students prefer subjects close to their real professional environment. This is because it is directly related to future work. In general, according to literature analysis, pseudo-recorded materials can be useful as a tool for teaching students, but their excessive use negatively affects the preparation of students for real professional communication. That is why many scientists recommend balancing original and non-original materials in the classroom.

Methodology

This study used the design of a quantitative descriptive study to examine the use of original materials in listening lessons of English as a foreign language and teachers' perceptions of their activities. The participants were 10 teachers of English as a foreign language from Uzbekistan who worked in secondary schools, colleges, and universities. Teachers were selected based on convenience samples because they were easily accessible and willing to participate in the study. Their educational experiment was from January 10 to 20 and they taught students from stages A1 to C1. The data was collected through a structured questionnaire prepared by the researcher based on previous original materials and listening research courses. The study consists of three parts:

- General information (learning experience, type of institution and years of experience);
- The use of real-life materials, including the frequency and type of materials used;
- The perceived impact of original materials on students' listening skills, motivation, self-confidence and communication in the classroom;

The survey is conducted online using Google forms. Participants were informed about the survey subjects and confirmed that their answers were used for academic purposes only. Access is guaranteed and anonymity is guaranteed. The data collection process took a week. The collected data were analyzed using theoretical statistical methods, including rates, percentages, and average results. The results are presented in the form of tables and web maps to clearly demonstrate the use of the teacher's basic resources and their effectiveness.

Results

how many years of teaching experience do you have?

10 ОТВЕТОВ

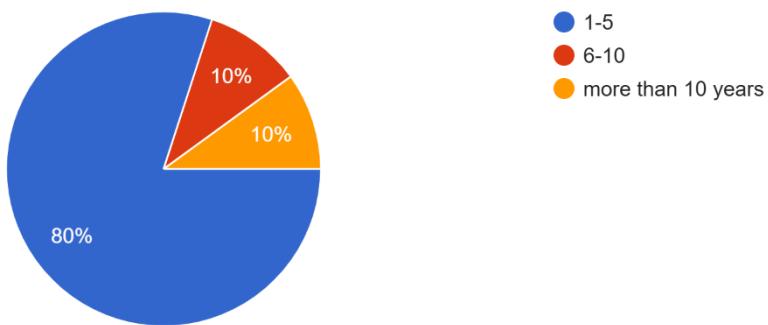


Figure 1. Years of participant's teaching experience

what type of institution do you currently work in?

10 ответов

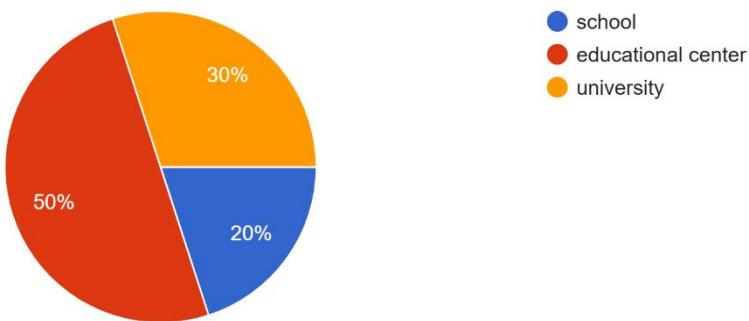


Figure 2. Workplace of participants

A total of 10 EFL teachers participated in the survey. The sample represents a diverse institutional context, with half of the respondents working in educational centers (50%), followed by University Professors (30%) and school professors (20%) (Figure 2). In terms of learning experience, most participants were educators early in their careers, with 80% indicating 1 to 5 years of learning experience. The remaining 20% are divided equally between people with experience from 6 to 10 years (10%) and people with experience of more than 10 years (10%) (Figure 1).

Which types of authentic listening materials do you use in your EFL listening classes?

10 ответов

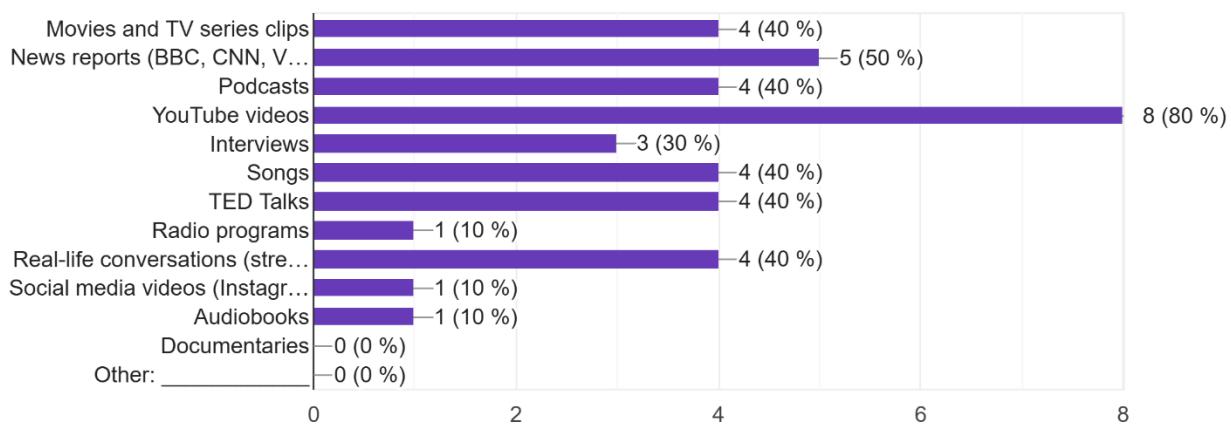


Figure 3. Types of authentic materials participants use in classes

Survey results show that ESL teachers use a variety of authentic listening media in their classrooms, acceptance rates vary depending on the type of media (Figure 3). YouTube videos have become the most used resource, with 8 out of 10 teachers (80%) including them in their listening instructions. There are reports from sources such as the BBC and CNN, which are used by half of the respondents (50%). A wide variety of materials have shown modest acceptance rates of 40% each, including clips from movies and TV series, podcasts, songs, TED Talks, and real conversations such as street interviews. Interviews are used by 30% of teachers, while radio broadcasts, social media videos from platforms such as Instagram and tiktok, and

audiobooks each have a minimum acceptance of 10%. It is noteworthy that none of the teachers interviewed used documentation, and no other materials were indicated in the "other" category.

Discussion

The results showed a strong preference for digital material and original videos, particularly those easily accessible via online platforms such as YouTube, while traditional audio formats such as radio podcasts and audiobooks were rarely used by the EFL educators surveyed. This confirms the results of previous studies in which light and visually valid materials increase teacher effectiveness and student engagement (Gilmore, 2007; Richards, 2001). The popularity of YouTube is due to the diversity of real content, ease of access and adaptability to various levels of performance. However, a relatively low level of radio programs, audiobooks and videos on social networks, lack of time, lack of proper content and difficulty in setting levels indicate that their use in the classroom may be limited. Or indicate inefficiency of linguistically complex materials. As for the demographic situation among teachers, the benefits of young teachers (1-5 years of work experience) can explain their continued dependence on online platforms. Young teachers often feel more comfortable and introduce technology and digital content into educational practice. But impartially distributing the kinds of materials emphasizes the importance of teacher education and institutional support, allowing educators to effectively select, adapt, and integrate a wide range of real resources.

Conclusion

The study examined the use of teacher-led classes and attitudes for improving listening achievement among students in Uzbekistan. The results show that teachers use authentic resources, particularly digital content such as videos, as proven to be very effective in improving students' language comprehension, motivation, and genuine English proficiency. This study highlights the importance of providing professional development opportunities for teachers to effectively integrate authentic content into their language instruction through audio learning. Despite the small sample size, the results provide valuable insights into current weapon industry practices in Uzbekistan. Future research may be conducted in qualitative way taking longer time to investigate how authentic materials will effect on students' listening comprehension.

Adabiyotlar, References, Литературы:

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