



**A STUDY OF THE LISTENING COMPREHENSION OF AN AUTHENTIC MATERIAL
CONDUCTED AMONG THE POST GRADUATE STUDENTS OF BHARATHIAR
UNIVERSITY**

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Abstract

This study investigates the effectiveness of authentic materials in enhancing the listening comprehension skills of postgraduate students. Authentic materials, such as podcasts, interviews, and real-world conversations, provide learners with exposure to natural language use, which is often absent in traditional classroom listening exercises. The primary objective of this research was to assess how the use of authentic materials influences the listening proficiency of postgraduate students. A mixed-methods approach was employed, combining quantitative data with qualitative insights gathered through student feedback. The participants selected are postgraduate students, engaged with a video material that mirrored real-life communication scenarios. The results show that students' understanding of a variety of accents, colloquial language, and contextual cues was much enhanced by exposure to real materials. Furthermore, students reported increased motivation and engagement when interacting with these materials. The study concludes that integrating authentic listening materials into postgraduate language programs can bridge the gap between academic and real-world language skills.

Keywords: Authentic materials, listening comprehension, language teaching.

Introduction

Authentic materials in teaching English language are resources useful to second language learners (Martinez, 2002). The authentic material offers several advantages in language training. These materials render learners to the actual world language use, including slang, idiomatic expressions and diverse accents, which help learners, understand and navigate different contexts more effectively. Nunan (1997) believes that because real materials offer rich language input, it is essential to expose students to them. Authentic materials engage students with content that is relevant and interesting to them, enhancing their motivation and making learning more meaningful. Learners can improve their comprehension of spoken and written language as well as their capacity to produce their own language more accurately and fluently by being exposed to actual language use (Liao & Lee, 2020). This approach also supports the development of critical thinking and comprehension skills as students interpret and respond to genuine content. Additionally, students reported feeling more motivated and interested in learning the language after being exposed to real resources (Chen, 2020). Teachers may create a more engaging and immersive learning environment that better prepares students for communication in the real world by including authentic resources.

Types of Authentic Materials

Gebhard (1996) classified authentic materials into three categories as follows:

1. Authentic listening materials

- **Podcasts:** Audio programs on various topics that provide exposure to conversational English and diverse accents.
- **Radio Shows:** Broadcasts and interviews that offer insights into spoken language and real-time communication.
- **Songs:** Lyrics from popular music that highlight colloquial expressions, slang, and cultural references.

2. Authentic visual materials

- **Television Programs and Movies:** Films, TV shows, and documentaries that display authentic dialogue, slang, and cultural contexts.
- **Commercials and Advertisements:** Promotional content that reflects how language is used to persuade and inform.
- **Websites and Blogs:** Online articles, blog posts, and social media content that reflect current trends and informal language.

3. Authentic printed materials

- **Newspapers and Magazines:** Articles, editorials, advertisements, and other printed materials from media sources.
- **Books and Novels:** Fiction and non-fiction works that showcase different writing styles and genres.
- **Menus:** Restaurant menus that provide examples of descriptive language and cultural cuisine.

Enhancing Language Comprehension Skills

1. **Listening** - Listening to authentic audio helps improve comprehension skills and exposes students to different accents and speech patterns. According to Chen and Lin (2013), learners' interest in the language can be increased and their listening comprehension can

be boosted by employing real materials like podcasts and news broadcasts.

2. **Reading** - These materials help learners develop critical reading skills by engaging with content designed for native speakers. As stated by Vukovic and Bratovic (2019), learners' reading comprehension and motivation to read in the target language can both be improved with the use of authentic resources like articles and short tales.
3. **Speaking** - Role-playing activities based on authentic scenarios, such as ordering food at a restaurant or making a phone call, enable learners to practice speaking in contexts that mimic real-life situations. According to Li and Li (2016), learners' speaking accuracy and fluency can be advanced with the help of actual resources like commercials and ads.
4. **Writing** - Students can engage in writing tasks that involve creating their own texts, such as emails, reviews, or blog posts, based on authentic models. According to Brown (2007), learners' writing skills and motivation to write in the target language can both be enhanced through use of authentic materials like newspapers and magazines.

Usage of Authentic Materials in English Language Teaching

Authentic materials will be useful in helping students to improve their practical knowledge on listening, speaking, reading and writing skills. It will introduce learners to varied accents, idiomatic expressions, and culturally relevant language. By using these materials the learning process of the students' will be more dynamic and engaging. It also enhances both their comprehension and communicative ability by, interacting with language as it is used by native speakers. Students will gain a deeper understanding of how English is applied in day to day life. Berardo (2006) lists the advantages of using real materials in language classes:

- They offer genuine cultural knowledge.
- They expose people to authentic language.
- They are more in tune with pupils' needs.
- They encourage innovative teaching methods.
- They have a positive influence on student motivation.

Review of Literature

Learners can obtain authentic information and understand what is happening in the world

around them by using authentic materials. Learners may be exposed to actual language when authentic information is extracted from authentic texts in a new or foreign language. (Guariento & Morley 2001)

One of the main justifications for utilizing genuine materials in the classroom is that learners will encounter the actual world and language as it is used in daily life once they are outside of the safe and monitored language learning setting. (Berardo 2006)

The authentic resources put language learning into context and assist in overcoming any barriers that exist between the language that is taught in the classroom and the language people regularly use in everyday life. This helps students connect the language they learn in the classroom with the language they use outside of it by identifying authentic resources as socially structured items for use in society. (Genhard 1996)

Authentic resources are helpful for students' overall verbal proficiency and listening skills. Compared to earlier times, pupils nowadays are perhaps able to handle the listening that is expected in the "real world." Since authentic writings show that the language is used by actual people for real-life purposes, they can be encouraging. (Edrenius 2017)

"Students should be exposed to as much authentic data as possible because, in the end, their learning task would be made more difficult if they only encountered fabricated dialogues and listening texts." Also, it is important for the learner to read and study as many different kinds of authentic material as possible. Because this may not only help and motivate students/ learners to bring the content and the subject matter of life near to them but will also enable them to make significant connections between the classroom world and the world outside the classroom. (Nunan 1999)

The authentic materials are advantage for both learners and teachers. Authentic materials are highly successful because they establish strong engagement not only between the teacher and students but also attention of the both. They have high interest value because they are extremely relevant and constantly updated as students get the feeling that materials inform them about what is happening in the world they live. (Oguz & Bahar 2008)

Aim of the Study

This study aims to find out listening comprehension abilities of students using, Audio – Visual authentic material and also to find out the students opinion, interests on using this material.

Selection of Informants

The participants selected for this study are students doing Post-graduate degree in various colleges of Coimbatore district. A total number of 42 participants who learn English as their second language have been selected for the study. These participants are from both rural and urban areas of Tamil Nadu.

Data Collection method

Random sampling method has been used in this research to collect the data. Questionnaire has been prepared using online survey tool (Google forms) and the link has been shared with the participants to collect data. Mixed method has been used in this research as it includes both qualitative and quantitative analysis. A 40 minutes interview given by former Indian cricketer Mr. Sachin Tendulkar for a TV show was attached in the form. The students were instructed to watch the video and answer the following questions.

Limitations of the study

Only the contents related to the interview of the former Indian cricketer Mr. Sachin Tendulkar has been chosen to understand the English language use.

Preparation of Questionnaire

The questionnaire was prepared to find out how authentic materials are useful in improving listening comprehension of students. The questionnaire given to the students were to test the listening comprehension skills such as identifying the main idea, understanding the vocabulary, getting the gist, finding the details, making inferences, using grammatical cues.

The questionnaire consists of four sections to test these comprehension skills.

SECTION A – In this section questions were given to test the knowledge of the students' identification of main idea of the speaker.

SECTION B – In this section questions were given to test, how the students interpret the main idea of the speaker.

SECTION C – In this section questions were given to test the students use of grammatical knowledge

SECTION D – In this section questions were given to test, how the students making inferences of

the main ideas of the speaker.

Findings and Discussion

Section A

Students' performance on identification skills

Table : 01

Q. No.	Questions	Correct answer		Wrong answer	
		Male (17)	Female (25)	Male (17)	Female (25)
1.	The development of the school was __ to my heart.	17	23	0	02
2.	The foundation aims to ___ the lives of underprivileged children through education	17	25	0	0
3.	It was ___ to see the young girls so eager to become teachers.	10	10	07	15
4.	When I shared the news with my mother, the smile she gave me was ____	13	25	04	0
5.	The___ of the foundation is to provide opportunities for all children, regardless of their background.	13	24	04	01
6.	The foundation ___ a person who has a large house to offer it as a space for children	13	23	04	02
7.	My wife ___ me to start the foundation, as she believed in its purpose.	14	25	03	0
8.	It is important to __ the energy of the young population in the right direction.	14	23	03	02
9.	The speaker ____ the foundation's work to the commitment required in their cricket career.	16	23	01	02

10.	The children ___at the residential school from the age of 3 to 16.	15	24	02	01
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Section –A contains 10 questions which tests their knowledge based on the main them of the AV material. The questions given in this section are direct questions from the words used by the speaker and the students are asked to find out the exact word used by the speaker. 87.4% of the students has chosen the correct answer and 12.6% has chosen the wrong answer.

Section B

Students' performance on recalling abilities

Table: 02

Q. No.	Questions	Correct answer		Wrong answer	
		Male	Female	Male	Female
1.	What is the primary focus of the foundation's work according to the passage?	13	20	04	05
2.	How many children will the residential school support?	9	13	08	12
3.	What personal feeling does the speaker express about naming the school after their parents?	14	21	03	04
4.	What are the long-term goals of the foundation mentioned in the passage?	14	20	03	05
5.	How does the speaker compare their commitment to cricket with their work at the foundation?	12	21	05	04
6.	What can be inferred about the speaker's attitude towards their parents' reaction?	13	19	04	06
7.	What is the role of the Parivaar Foundation in supporting children, according to the passage?	12	18	05	07

8.	What does the speaker consider to be the greatest satisfaction from their work?	14	17	03	08
9.	How does the foundation involve the community in its efforts?	10	16	07	09
10.	What vision does the speaker have for the future of the foundation?	10	16	07	09

Section – B contains 10 questions which test their recalling ability. The students were given questions and asked to identify the main idea of the AV material to give answers. 73.61% of the students has selected the correct answers and 26.39% has selected the wrong answers.

Section C

Students' performance on grammatical skills

Table: 03

Q. No.	Questions	Correct answer		Wrong answer	
		Male	Female	Male	Female
1.	The foundation works ___ improving the lives of underprivileged children.	14	14	03	11
2.	The school will guide students ___ the age of 3 to 16.	08	10	09	15
3.	He felt proud ___ naming the school after his parents.	06	12	11	13
4.	The young girls promised to come back and teach the next generation ___ their village	13	16	04	09
5.	The speaker is committed ___ making a difference in the lives of others.	15	21	02	04

6.	The speaker shared the news with his mother, ____she smiled with pride.	14	19	03	06
7.	The foundation helps children, ____ it also provides opportunities for them to become future leaders.	11	16	06	09
8.	The girls want to become teachers ____they can give back to their community	12	16	05	09
9.	The speaker was tired ____ continued working on the foundation's mission.	11	15	06	10
10.	We can achieve great things ____ we work together to support the children.	10	19	07	06

Section – C contains 10 questions which test their grammatical knowledge. The students were asked to fill in the gap with suitable words to complete the sentence. 66.6% of students answered correctly and 33.4% students answered wrongly

Section D

Students' performance on making inferences

Table: 04

Q. No.	Questions	Correct answer		Wrong answer	
		Male	Female	Male	Female
1.	Did the speaker name the school after his parents?	16	23	01	02
2.	Is the Parivaar Foundation working with children from the age of 3 to 16?	17	21	0	04
3.	Did the young girls promise to return and teach the next generation in their village?	16	21	01	04

4.	Does the speaker's wife, Dr. Anjali, play a role in supporting the foundation's work?	14	20	03	05
5.	Is the speaker's ultimate goal to transition from a sports-loving nation to a sports-playing nation?	12	20	05	05
	Match the Following:				
6.	Parivaar Foundation	13	16	04	09
7.	Residential School	11	13	06	12
8.	Speaker's Goal	10	16	07	09
9.	Girls in the Village	16	14	01	11

Section – D contains 10 questions which test their inferences. The students were given Alternative –response questions and match the following questions to measure their ability, on how well they make an educated guess to the given AV material. 71.15% students have given the correct answer and 28.85% students have given the wrong answers.

Total percentage obtained by both male and female students for the given questionnaire:

Table: 05

SECTION	Correct answers (%)		Incorrect answers (%)	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
A	84.52%	91.8%	15.48%	8.2%
B	71.6%	75.31%	28.4%	24.7%
C	67%	63.2%	33%	36.8%
D	71.42%	76.42%	28.6%	23.58%

Table: 05 provides the percentage of the students' score for the given questionnaire, by both male and female. It is understood that students show more interest in learning skills of listening comprehension by using authentic material. This is in accordance with (Peacock & Ho, 2003) The incorporation of genuine items helps students' vocabulary grow. Also in line with (Sumarsono, 2017) the use of authentic materials not only increases student motivation, but also

provides a real context for language learning. The use of authentic material has some positive effects on vocabulary acquisition, listening comprehension and understanding the cultural context of the language. These materials show the students to real life language use. This is in accordance with findings of (Treve, 2023) listening comprehension is one of the most important skills in language learning, and using authentic materials improves their ability to comprehend the spoken language.

Opinion of the students' based on the interview

Table: 06

Q. no.	Questions	Responses (Male - 17 / Female - 25)									
		SA		A		N		D		SD	
		M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
1.	Do you feel that authentic materials make learning English more engaging	3	5	8	16	6	4				
2.	Would you recommend the use of authentic materials to other English language learners	5	8	12	11		6				
3.	Have you noticed any improvement in your ability to understand native speakers after using authentic materials	0	4	17	21		0				
4.	Do you believe that using authentic materials helps you understand cultural contexts better	1	2	9	17	7	6				
5.	Are you satisfied with the use of authentic materials in your English language learning experience	2	3	11	14	4	8				
6.	Do you think the use of authentic materials boost your motivation to learn English	10	21	0	0	7	4				

7.	Do you find this method to be more effective to improve your English language skill	5	4	10	14	2	7				
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SA – Strongly Agree **A** – Agree **N** – Neutral **D** – Disagree **SD** – Strongly Disagree **M** – Male **F** – Female

Table:06 represents the responses collected from the students based on their opinion. These responses are collected from both male and female students.

Comparison of students interest towards the use of authentic material

Table : 07

Impact of Authentic materials in students'	Positive %		Neutral %		Negative %	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Listening Comprehension	82%	80%	18%	20%	-	-
Overall Interests	75%	78%	25%	22%	-	-

Table:07 represents the overall interests and opinion percentage of the students after the use of authentic material. The students were given Likert-type questions to measure the effect and improvement in their target language after using the AV material. Clearly from the table we can

understand that greater positive response given to the material. Here most of the students show positive attitude towards this material as it provides a different approach in their learning. Some students show neutral response as they are already familiar with this method. This is in accordance with findings of (Faiz, 2023) in language teaching, authentic materials not only serve as a tool to introduce new vocabulary and sentence structures, but also help students understand

cultural nuances, idiomatic expressions and language variations in different social contexts. Mostly the students were new to this kind of learning method. Majority of the participants prefers that teaching materials should be from TV shows and newspapers. They find it more engaging and motivating in learning English language. Also (Nuttall, 1996) in his research states that "Authentic texts are motivating, as they are a proof that the language has been applied by real people for real-life purposes " . As a result students can experience the use of language in real life inside the classroom with better materials which provides the authenticity of the language they learn. Also there are lot of materials available on the internet. The learner or teacher who prefers to use authentic materials should double check the content of the material whether it is relevant to their goal as well as their proficiency level. Also the result of (Kilickaya, 2004) says that, "authentic materials can include complex vocabulary and structures that require more work to simplify and explain in order to make them appropriate for their learners, which may add burden to the teacher."

Conclusion

This study has shown that, incorporating the development of technology in English language teaching has an impact over the students' language learning skills. This study shows that students are actively participating and involving in learning language when such method is incorporated. The students show more interest to these types of methods rather than listening to a textbook or lectures. Students can bridge the difference between their academic knowledge and their practical communication skills by using authentic materials when learning English (Mitrulescu & Negoescu, 2024). Based on the study, students should be introduced to new methods which include real resources to teach the language. It is hoped that this study helps the upcoming and present learners to improve their second language acquisition.

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