

## **USING AUTHENTIC MATERIAL TO IMPROVE THE STUDENTS' LISTENING SKILL IN PRIMARY SCHOOL**

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**Abstract.** This study investigates the efficacy of incorporating authentic materials into primary school curriculum to bolster students' listening skills. With the increasing importance of communicative competence in language acquisition, particularly in the early stages of education, the utilization of authentic materials presents a promising avenue for pedagogical innovation. Authentic materials, sourced from real-life contexts, offer rich linguistic features and cultural nuances, potentially fostering more engaging and effective learning experiences. This annotated research delves into various methodologies and strategies employed in integrating authentic materials into listening skill development activities within primary school settings. Through a comprehensive review of existing literature, the study assesses the impact of authentic materials on students' listening comprehension, language proficiency, and motivation. Moreover, it examines practical considerations, such as material selection, task design, and classroom implementation techniques. The findings contribute valuable insights into the theoretical framework and practical implications of utilizing authentic materials for enhancing listening skills among primary school students, offering educators evidence-based strategies to optimize language learning outcomes.

**Key words:** Authentic materials, listening skills, primary school education, language acquisition, pedagogical innovation, language proficiency, communicative competence.

### **Introduction**

Listening skills play a pivotal role in language acquisition and are integral to communicative competence. Particularly in primary school settings, where students are just beginning their journey with a new language, developing these skills is of utmost importance. In light of this, the integration of authentic materials into the educational process presents a promising approach to enhancing students' listening abilities. Authentic materials, sourced from real-life situations and resources, provide students with richer linguistic samples and immerse them in an authentic language environment, thereby facilitating more effective and engaging learning.

Authentic materials refer to resources created for native speakers in real-life contexts, such as conversations, podcasts, songs, news broadcasts, and videos. These materials provide learners with exposure to natural language usage, including variations in accent, intonation, speed, and idiomatic expressions. Utilizing authentic materials in the classroom can engage students more actively, making the learning process more enjoyable and meaningful.

The significance of incorporating authentic materials in primary school education lies in their ability to bridge the gap between classroom learning and real-world communication. They help students develop not only their listening skills but also their cultural awareness and critical thinking abilities. Furthermore, authentic materials can cater to diverse learning styles and interests, making language learning more inclusive and accessible.

This study aims to explore the impact of using authentic materials on the listening skills of primary school students. By examining various types of authentic resources and their implementation in the classroom, this research seeks to provide insights into effective teaching strategies that can enhance listening comprehension among young learners. The findings of this study will contribute to the growing body of knowledge in language education and offer practical recommendations for

educators seeking to improve their students' listening skills through the use of authentic materials.

## **Material and methods**

### What are authentic materials?

One description of authentic materials says that their purpose is to communicate meaning and information and that they are produced for real communication rather than to teach language (Thomas, 2014). Authentic materials for the English language classroom are often free and very easy to find online or perhaps in certain locations in your communities. Here are some examples:

- TV shows, news segments, documentaries, movie clips and trailers, online videos, and commercials
- Radio broadcasts, songs, and podcasts
- Photographs, artwork, signs, postcards, maps, and advertisements
- Magazines, letters and emails, news articles, brochures, websites, blogs, and social media posts
- Recipes, food labels, bus and train schedules, menus, and price tags and product descriptions

[1]

Authentic materials, drawn from real-life contexts and resources, represent an invaluable resource for language educators aiming to enhance students' listening skills in primary school settings. Unlike traditional instructional materials, which may lack authenticity and relevance to students' everyday experiences, authentic materials provide authentic language samples that reflect the complexities of natural communication. These materials encompass a wide range of sources, including but not limited to audio recordings, videos, podcasts, songs, interviews, and authentic texts such as advertisements, news articles, and dialogues from movies or TV shows. By immersing students in genuine language use, authentic materials offer rich linguistic input, cultural insights, and opportunities for meaningful interaction, thereby fostering more engaging and effective learning experiences.

According to Buck, (2000) "Listening is a form of comprehension where the listener is trying to get some meaning from the language". This statement really made teachers wonder about the procedures they were carrying out in the English language classroom and the real purpose the development of this skill had for learners. As Allen (1966) remarks in Robinett (1978), "The goal of the listening skill is to enable the learner to perceive the second language in the way native speakers perceive it". This is the ideal goal that teachers want to reach with their students, but in some cases, it is not possible because there are many causes that do not allow students to reach this goal, including the activities of the class that are not always sufficient to accomplish it with. An example of this is the lack of material which helps students to get used to real speech and the lack of some specific criteria to choose it. This way, teachers will know how to teach students not only to deal with real language but also to face real situations. That is why the necessity exists of implementing some clear steps to follow in order to improve listening comprehension in students and, thus, to obtain a closer native speaker likeness of the listening skill. [2]

In the same way, Dick Lee and Delmar Hatesohl (1999) also say: "Even though listening is the communication skill we use most frequently, it is also the skill in which we have had the less training". With these statements it is clearly seen that listening can be the birth of the learning of any language; in other words, if a person is able to understand what he/she hears, he/she gets easily familiar with the sounds and rhythms of the language and, as such, the other skills can be developed faster and better, because as Lee and Hatesohl signaled from their own experience, "We have had much more formal training in other major communication skills – writing, reading, speaking". It means that very few people have had any extended formal training in listening. [3]

Here is research investigates the impact of using authentic materials on the listening skills of primary school students. Authentic materials, such as real-life audio recordings and videos, are increasingly being recognized as valuable tools in language education due to their ability to expose learners to natural language use and cultural nuances. This study aims to explore whether these materials can offer a more effective and engaging alternative to traditional listening exercises, thereby improving students' listening comprehension and overall language proficiency.

Participants: The study involved 60 primary school students aged 8 to 10 years from three different classes in a public primary school. The participants were selected based on their similar levels of listening proficiency, as determined by a preliminary listening assessment. Consent was

obtained from the students' parents and the school administration.

#### Materials:

The materials used in this study included a range of authentic listening resources such as:

1. *Audio Clips*: Natural conversations, radio broadcasts, and podcasts appropriate for children's listening levels.

2. *Videos*: Short educational videos, animated stories, and children's news segments.

3. *Music*: Age-appropriate songs in English, including nursery rhymes and simple pop songs.

4. *Printed Materials*: Transcripts of audio clips and videos, as well as song lyrics to support listening activities.

These materials were chosen for their relevance to the students' interests and their alignment with the language curriculum.

#### Methods:

The study was conducted over a period of 12 weeks and involved the following steps:

1. Pre-Assessment: All participants took a standardized listening comprehension test to establish baseline data on their listening skills.

2. Intervention: The students were divided into two groups: the experimental group, which used authentic materials, and the control group, which used traditional, scripted listening exercises. The experimental group participated in three 30-minute listening sessions per week, where they engaged with the selected authentic materials. Activities included listening to and discussing audio clips, watching and summarizing videos, and singing along to songs.

3. Instructional Approach: The experimental group's listening activities were designed to be interactive and engaging. Teachers facilitated discussions, asked comprehension questions, and encouraged students to express their thoughts and reflections on the materials. Visual aids, such as images and subtitles, were used to support understanding.

4. Post-Assessment: At the end of the 12-week period, both groups took the same standardized listening comprehension test as a post-assessment. Additionally, qualitative data were collected through student feedback forms and teacher observations to gauge engagement and perceived improvement.

#### Data Analysis:

The pre- and post-assessment scores were analyzed using statistical methods to determine any significant differences in listening skill improvement between the experimental and control groups. Qualitative data from feedback forms and observations were analyzed thematically to identify patterns and insights regarding the use of authentic materials.

#### Ethical Considerations:

The study adhered to ethical guidelines for research involving minors. Informed consent was obtained from all participants and their guardians. The students' participation was voluntary, and they were assured of their right to withdraw from the study at any time. Data confidentiality and anonymity were maintained throughout the research process.

By systematically examining the impact of authentic materials on listening skills, this study aims to provide robust evidence to support the integration of real-life resources in primary language education.

## Results and Discussion

### Quantitative Data

The analysis of the pre-test and post-test scores revealed significant improvements in the listening skills of students in the experimental group compared to the control group. The average test scores are summarized in the table below:

Group	Average Score (Pre-test)	Average Score (Post-test)	Improvement
Experimental Group	60.3	78.5	18.2
Control Group	59.3	66.2	6.5

A t-test for independent samples indicated that the improvement in the experimental group's scores was statistically significant ( $p < 0.05$ ) compared to the control group. This suggests that the use of authentic materials had a substantial positive impact on students' listening skills.

## Qualitative Data

The analysis of student feedback forms and teacher observations revealed several key themes:

1. Engagement and motivation: Students in the experimental group showed a high level of interest and motivation. They frequently mentioned that they found the authentic materials to be engaging and enjoyable, which made the learning process more interesting.

2. Cultural understanding: The authentic materials helped students gain a deeper understanding of cultural aspects related to the language. They were exposed to different accents, idiomatic expressions, and everyday scenarios, which enriched their learning experience.

3. Diversity and accessibility: Teachers observed that authentic materials catered to diverse learning styles and interests, making the lessons more inclusive. This variety allowed students to connect with the content on a personal level.

## Discussion

The findings of this study demonstrate that using authentic materials significantly enhances the listening skills of primary school students. The marked improvement in test scores in the experimental group supports the hypothesis that authentic materials provide a more effective and engaging learning experience compared to traditional methods.

1. Effectiveness of authentic materials: Authentic materials, such as recordings of real conversations and videos, offer students exposure to natural language use. This helps them become accustomed to the normal pace, accents, and intonations of native speakers, which is crucial for real-world communication.

2. Engagement and motivation: The high levels of engagement and motivation observed in students using authentic materials suggest that these resources make learning more enjoyable and interesting. This is corroborated by qualitative data, where students expressed a positive attitude towards using these materials.

3. Cultural enrichment: Authentic materials not only improve listening skills but also enhance students' cultural awareness. They provide insights into the daily lives and cultural practices of native speakers, which is important for developing a comprehensive understanding of the language.

This study indicates that integrating authentic materials into listening instruction in primary schools has significant benefits. These materials not only improve listening skills but also boost motivation, engagement, and cultural understanding among students. The findings provide valuable insights for educators aiming to enhance language learning through the use of real-world resources. Further research could explore the long-term effects of using authentic materials and their impact on other language skills.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, the integration of authentic materials offers immense potential for improving students' listening skills in primary school settings. By exposing students to real-life language use, authentic materials enhance listening comprehension, promote language proficiency, and foster motivation and engagement. However, successful implementation requires careful consideration of material selection, pedagogical strategies, and technological support. By harnessing the power of authentic materials, educators can create dynamic and culturally enriching learning environments that empower students to become proficient and confident listeners in the target language.

Moving forward, educators are encouraged to consider the adoption of authentic materials in their teaching practices to foster greater student engagement and motivation. Further research could explore the long-term effects of using these materials across different educational contexts and languages, aiming to refine teaching methodologies and optimize language learning outcomes in primary schools. By embracing authentic materials, educators can better prepare students for real-world communication and equip them with essential language skills for future academic and professional success.

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