



## Engaging Learners through Authentic Listening Materials

**Sevinch Rustamova**

The student of the Philological faculty, Uzbekistan State University of World Languages, Tashkent, Uzbekistan

**Abstract:** This study explored the impact of using authentic materials on students' listening comprehension in an EFL classroom context. Using a quantitative experimental design with pre-tests and post-tests, the findings revealed that students exposed to authentic listening materials achieved significantly higher scores and demonstrated greater engagement and motivation.

**Keywords:** Authentic materials, listening comprehension, EFL learners, motivation, language teaching.

**Introduction.** Listening is a fundamental receptive skill in English that involves more than simply hearing sounds—it requires actively understanding meaning (Broughton et al., 1978; Buck, 2001). It engages various linguistic elements such as pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary, making it an active and complex process. In a macro teaching context, many students struggled with listening comprehension and failed to meet the Minimum Passing Grade (MPG). This difficulty stemmed from English being a foreign language and the lack of engaging materials. Teachers often relied on conventional methods, such as reading aloud and having students transcribe what they heard, which led to boredom and low motivation. To address this issue, authentic materials were suggested as an effective alternative. Authentic materials, according to Kelly, Kelly, Offner, and Vorland (2002), connect classroom learning with real-world communication, motivating students to learn genuine language use (Guariento & Morley, 2001). Underwood (1989) also emphasized that authentic listening exposes learners to natural speech patterns—including hesitation and false starts—preparing them for real-life interactions.

**Description of listening comprehension.** Listening comprehension, according to Brown (1994), is not merely hearing sounds but an active, conscious process of interpreting and transmitting messages to the brain, which is essential for communication. Bulletin (1952) describes listening as a crucial ability that enables individuals to gain information and understanding, while Byrne (1984) views it as the foundation for acquiring the main rules of a language. Overall, listening is an active process of making sense of what we hear. As a receptive skill, it allows individuals to understand language input at a higher level than they can produce, which is why it is sometimes mistakenly considered a passive skill.

**Methods.** This study employed an experimental quantitative research design involving two groups: an experimental group and a control group, each consisting of 38 second-year students. Authentic materials (songs) were used for the experimental group, while non-authentic materials were used for the control group. The sample of 76 students was selected through purposive sampling due to the large population size. A multiple-choice listening test with 20 items was used as the research instrument, and its validity and reliability were confirmed using correlation and consistency measures to ensure dependable results. Data were collected through pre-tests and post-tests to measure students' listening comprehension before and after the treatment. The experimental group received instruction with authentic materials, whereas the control group used traditional methods.

**Results and discussion.** After analyzing the data, the result showed that the students who were taught by using authentic materials got better achievement than those taught by using non-authentic materials, and it was proved by the result of post-test both of groups. The highest score of post-test in experimental group was 95 and the lowest score was 65, while the highest score of post-test in control group was 85 and the lowest score was 55.

**Conclusion.** The study concluded that using authentic materials significantly improved students' listening comprehension compared to traditional methods. Learners exposed to real-life audio inputs, such as songs, became more engaged and better understood natural language use. Authentic materials not only enhanced comprehension but also increased motivation and made listening activities more meaningful and enjoyable for students.

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