


A Content Analysis of Listening Activities in an Indonesian EFL English Textbook: Alignment with the Authenticity

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A B S T R A C T

This study investigates the types of listening activities and the extent to which they reflect authenticity in the Indonesian EFL textbook Bahasa Inggris untuk SMA/SMK/MAK Kelas 10 A published by Intan Pariwara. Addressing this gap, this study investigates the authenticity of listening activities in one Indonesian EFL textbook widely used at the senior high school level. The analysis is grounded in the theoretical frameworks of types of listening activities proposed by Brown & Abeywickrama (2019) and authenticity by Breen (1985), which emphasize real-world language use and meaningful communicative purposes. Through content analysis, all listening activities across 20 listening activities were analyzed using rubric for measuring levels of authenticity in listening activities based on Rathert (2016). The study identifies the distribution of listening activity types and examines the level of authenticity in both tasks and texts. The findings reveal that selective listening is the most dominant type, while extensive listening is absent. In terms of authenticity, most tasks and texts are semi-authentic, with limited fully authentic materials. These results indicate that the textbook emphasizes controlled and form-focused listening practice, offering limited opportunities for learners to engage with real-life spoken English. The study highlights the need for more diverse and authentic listening inputs to better support students' communicative competence in EFL contexts.

Keywords: *Listening Activities, Authenticity, EFL Textbook, Spoken Texts, Indonesian Senior High School*

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INTRODUCTION

Listening is often described as the most natural way to acquire a language, yet for many EFL students, it remains one of the most challenging skills to master. It is one of the main language skills in learning English as a foreign language or a second language (Al-Janaydeh & Deif, 2021). It involves grasping knowledge and interpreting meaning from spoken input (Vani, 2023). Without strong listening skills, students may struggle to comprehend conversations effectively. Therefore, developing listening competence is crucial and can be achieved through exposure to authentic materials such as digital media, news, radio, audiobooks, public speeches, real life interactions, and textbooks. Despite the availability of various authentic sources, textbooks remain the primary learning resource in formal educational settings.

As one of the main sources of materials in EFL classrooms, textbooks play a significant role in shaping the learning experience by providing comprehensive content. In fact, textbooks are official course materials designed to guide and support teaching and learning (Romania & Martina, 2020). A well-designed textbook exposes learners to various language forms, including listening activities that reflect real-world usage (Siregar et al., 2024). Effective learning requires materials adapted to students' needs, enabling them to develop proper strategies (Mithans & Ivanus, 2020). In contexts with limited access to native speakers, textbooks serve as a bridge offering controlled yet realistic listening practice.

In relation to this study, numerous researchers have examined EFL textbooks and language materials. Study by Torrez and Lund (2021) examined the first Nicaraguan ELT

textbook series to assess its alignment with their national curriculum, which prioritizes communication skills development. Then, in a study conducted by Zhang (2020) he found that "A Listening Course (1)" textbook was well structured but lacked authentic listening materials. Moreover, Alsulami (2021) assessed a textbook titled "Traveller 4" in Saudi Arabia, identifying strengths, weaknesses, and areas for improvement. However, Morales (2018) analyzed the "Global English" textbook in Chile; his study shows noting its focus on surface-level comprehension with little progression. All the textbooks analyzed were published by the government.

Additionally, studies have been conducted to evaluate the quality of listening materials in Indonesian EFL textbooks. As Romania & Martina (2020) assessed the listening content in an English textbook aligned with the 2013 curriculum, their study focused on evaluating the listening activities in a textbook published by Erlangga. A study by Syahrial (2017) assessed English teaching materials used in vocational high schools, specifically evaluating the linguistic content of the textbooks. Another research by Pangaribuan et al., (2019) analyzes the strengths and weaknesses of the listening material in the "Pathway to English" textbook used for Senior High School Grade Eleven and identifies the impact of the listening materials on students' listening skills, pronunciation, and comprehension. Previous research (Alsulami, 2021; Gilmore, 2019; Zhang, 2020) indicates that many EFL textbooks tend to overemphasize controlled and selective listening activities while neglecting extensive and authentic input. Thus, combining Breen's authenticity framework with Brown's classification allows for a more comprehensive evaluation of how textbooks prepare learners for real communicative contexts.

None of the previous studies mentioned above focused on authenticity, which is one of the principles of materials development according to Tomlinson (Brown & Raza, 2019). Therefore, the researcher is interested in analyzing listening activities in English language textbooks used in Indonesian senior high schools, focusing on the authenticity of listening activities by assessing their alignment with real life communication contexts. In evaluating listening activities, Brown & Abeywickrama (2019) typology is often employed, which classifies listening into intensive, responsive, selective, and extensive types. This framework highlights the need for balance between bottom-up skills, such as decoding sounds and words, and top-down strategies, such as inferring meaning and comprehending extended discourse.

The findings are expected to provide useful recommendations for educators, textbook writers, and policymakers to improve the design and quality of listening activities in EFL textbooks in Indonesia.

Based on this background, the study addresses two research questions: (1) What types of listening activities are included in the selected Indonesian EFL textbook? and (2) To what extent do these activities reflect authenticity in terms of tasks and texts? The study aims to classify listening activities according to Brown & Abeywickrama (2019) typology and to evaluate their authenticity based on Breen (1985) and Rathert (2016) frameworks. Authenticity has become a central concept in language materials development, as it bridges classroom learning with real-world communication. Breen (1985) distinguishes authenticity into several dimensions, but two are particularly relevant for textbook analysis: authenticity of tasks and authenticity of texts. Authentic tasks require learners to engage in meaningful communication, such as problem-solving or decision-making, while authentic texts are characterized by features of natural spoken language, including hesitations, informal expressions, and spontaneous interaction. To complement this, Rathert (2016) categorizes materials into authentic, semi-authentic, and non-authentic, offering a practical framework to assess the degree to which classroom input reflects real-life language use.

METHOD

The study analyzed the listening activities in an Indonesian EFL textbook, focusing on the types of listening activities and the authenticity. This study employed a content analysis following Cohen et al., (2007). Content analysis was a research method used to systematically analyze text, images, or other forms of communication by categorizing and interpreting their

meaning. It was particularly useful in educational research as it allows for an in-depth examination of instructional materials, such as textbooks, to assess their alignment with pedagogical goals. This study also employed directed content analysis, the researcher attempts to further describe a phenomenon already addressed by theory, applying a deductive approach and using identified concepts or codes from exiting research to validate the theory (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). The researcher followed Creswell (2014) a non-participatory approach and maintained objectivity without influencing the research subject to conduct a neutral assessment of the textbook.

The object of this study was the selected textbook, which is widely used as supplementary material in Indonesian senior high schools. The unit of analysis consisted of all listening activities included in the book. These activities were examined in terms of their type classified into intensive, responsive, selective, and extensive listening. Their authenticity, assessed at three levels (authentic, semi-authentic, non-authentic).

Data were collected by extracting all listening-related instructions and audio tasks from the textbook, then coding them using established frameworks. The categorization of listening activity types followed Brown and Abeywickrama's typology, while authenticity was assessed using Breen's dimensions of authenticity and Rathert's classification levels. A text was considered "authentic" if it originated from a real source, "semi-authentic" if it had been adapted from a real source or resembled an authentic text, and "non-authentic" if it was specifically created for language teaching purposes (Rathert, 2016). Based on these criteria, the researcher determined the listening activity categories, classifying them as authentic, semi-authentic, and non-authentic accordingly.

This study adopted Breen's (1985) framework of authenticity and Brown and Abeywickrama's classification of listening performance to categorize the types of listening activities and types of authenticity.

Table 1. Types of Listening Activities and Authenticity Framework

Types of listening activities (Brown & Abeywickrama, 2019)	<p>Intensive Listening: Listening for perception of specific elements like phonemes, words, intonation, and discourse markers. Example: Hear: "He's from California." Choose: A. He's from California. B. She's from California.</p> <p>Responsive Listening: Listening to short stretches (greetings, questions, commands) and making brief replies. Example: Hear: "How are you?" Respond: "I'm fine, thanks."</p> <p>Selective Listening: Listening to longer input to find specific pieces of information. Example: Listen to a student's schedule and complete a blank weekly calendar.</p> <p>Extensive Listening: Listening to long passages for global understanding (gist, main ideas). Example: Students listen to a short story in English and later summarize the main idea.</p>
Authenticity (Breen, 1985)	<p>Authenticity of tasks requires learners to engage in meaningful communication rather than just mechanical exercises. Simulate real life situations where language is naturally used and encourage students to interpret and produce language in ways similar to actual language use outside the classroom.</p> <p>Authenticity of texts evaluates whether the listening materials themselves are derived from or resemble real world sources. Authentic texts include unscripted conversations, interviews, news reports, and podcasts, as they reflect natural speech patterns and vocabulary. If the textbook primarily uses scripted dialogues or artificially simplified content, it may reduce learners' exposure to genuine language use.</p>

To support the analysis of the authenticity in listening activities, an analysis rubric was used to measure their authenticity adopted from Rathert (2016).

Table 2. Rubric for Measuring Levels of Authenticity in Listening Activities (Based on Rathert, 2016)

Types of authenticity	Criteria
Authentic	a text is authentic when it is not produced for the aim of language teaching
Semi-Authentic	Other text types specially composed to resemble authentic texts are produced to provide contextualized samples of the linguistic content to be taught, and when they either look like an authentic text or is a modified authentic text.
Non-Authentic	Inauthenticity mirrors an impoverished version of the language, and learners may find it challenging, especially when they come across genuine discourse.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This research aimed to analyze the listening activities featured in the textbook *Bahasa Inggris untuk SMA/SMK/MAK Kelas 10 A*, particularly in relation to their alignment with the concept of authenticity in English as a Foreign Language (EFL). The analysis focused on identifying the types of listening activities and evaluating the extent to which the tasks and texts reflect authentic language use, as defined by relevant theoretical frameworks. The study specifically sought to categorize the types of listening activities based on the typology proposed by Brown & Abeywickrama (2019), and to assess the authenticity of listening tasks and texts using the framework developed by Rathert (2016) and Breen (1985)

Table 3. Listening Activities in the Textbook

Listening Type	Occurrences	Description
Intensive	5	Listening for perception of specific elements like phonemes, words or intonation
Responsive	6	Typically, short Q&A or reaction-based tasks
Selective	9	Frequently used to extract specific information
Extensive	0	No activity was found requiring global understanding

Classification of Listening Activity Types

The analysis shows that selective listening activities are the most dominant type found in the textbook *Bahasa Inggris untuk SMA/SMK/MAK Kelas 10 A*. These activities require students to extract specific information such as names, dates, numbers, or keywords from a short-spoken text. This aligns with Brown & Abeywickrama (2019) classification of listening activities that engage bottom-up processing where learners focus on decoding language features at the sound and word level. Such tasks are beneficial in supporting accuracy and detail-oriented comprehension, especially for EFL learners who are still developing their listening fluency (Al-Janaydeh & Deif, 2021; Gilmore, 2019). This aligns with Hanifa (2018) findings in junior high school textbooks in Indonesia, where listening tasks were organized logically but lacked exposure to spontaneous language use. The situation is similar in the current textbook, where tasks may follow a logical sequence but are often scripted and controlled, with few opportunities for students to practice natural or spontaneous listening.

Intensive listening was appeared five times in the textbook, requiring students to understand the general meaning and also to become familiarized with English pronunciation, intonation, and the changes in language flow (Ahmadpour & Asadollahfam, 2018). According to Alsulami (2021), intensive listening is especially useful when introducing new vocabulary. However, without being followed by more integrative listening types, learners may become overly reliant on scripted cues and fail to adapt to more dynamic speech found in real-world interaction (Kimsesiz, 2023). The dominance of selective and intensive listening types indicates that the textbook emphasizes comprehension of isolated information rather than holistic understanding. This mirrors a form-focused approach rather than a communicative one.

Although responsive only appeared six times, its presence provides short interactional listening experiences where learners respond to prompts or questions. This type supports immediate processing and output, such as replying to a greeting or choosing the correct response. Yongki (2018) emphasize that responsive listening tasks aim not only to promote immediate auditory processing, but also to cultivate pragmatic awareness, cultural appropriateness, and the ability to respond effectively in interaction. Qasserras (2023) also recommends combining responsive listening with follow-up tasks like discussions or retelling to ensure meaningful engagement.

Notably, extensive listening is absent from the textbook. This type involves engaging with longer texts such as monologues, interviews, or narratives, where students develop global comprehension and inference-making abilities. Because the textbook contains no

extensive listening tasks, learners are denied sustained exposure to extended, meaning-rich spoken discourse (stories, talks, announcements, lectures) that research identifies as critical for building global comprehension and listening fluency (Ivone & Renandya, 2019; Newton & Nation, 2020; Tran & Thao, 2021). Several scholars stress the importance of extensive listening for developing top-down strategies, which include predicting, summarizing, and understanding context (Blinova, 2021; Gilmore, 2019; Poyonova et al., 2025). These findings are reinforced by Larandang et al., (2023), who showed that the development of top-down listening strategies essential for processing extended discourse relies heavily on consistent exposure to longer listening inputs. This limited variety implies that while the textbook prepares students to process segmented language, it does not sufficiently prepare them to understand authentic spoken language in context. The complete absence of extensive listening suggests that students are not being adequately trained in global comprehension or interpretative skills.

The analysis shows that selective listening is the most dominant activity type in the textbook, while intensive five times and responsive listening appear six times. Although selective tasks help learners focus on details, their overuse limits students' opportunities to develop broader comprehension skills. The lack of balance is more evident with the complete absence of extensive listening, which is important for building global understanding and top-down processing. Overall, the textbook focuses more on controlled and segmented input rather than helping students understand authentic spoken language in context.

Table 4. Authenticity of Listening Tasks

Authenticity Level	Frequency	Percentage	Example
Authentic	2	10%	Responding to a voice message (p.58)
Semi-authentic	13	65%	Completing a dialogue with missing parts (p.11)
Non-authentic	5	25%	Circling vocabulary words (p.8)

Levels of Task Authenticity in Listening Activities

Only a small number of activities in the textbook qualify as fully authentic, where either the texts or tasks reflect genuine communicative purposes. This finding is in line with other research on textbooks showcasing the fact that fully authentic listening activities are limited (Halim et al., 2018; Ivone & Renandya, 2019; Zhang, 2020). The rare occurrences of authentic listening activities might be attributed to the tendency of textbook designers to prioritize pedagogical control and curriculum alignment over communicative realism. As noted by Mishan & Timmis (2022) authentic materials often pose challenges in terms of language complexity, cultural references, and unpredictability, which may lead publishers to avoid them. Moreover, teachers may feel more comfortable with scripted materials that match assessment standards (Tran & Thao, 2021). In the textbook, only 10% of tasks meet this criterion. These include listening to an audio schedule and making a decision, which mirrors real-life situations. According to Ortiz & Artunduaga (2017) emphasize that real-world tasks involve unpredictability, negotiation of meaning, and personal interpretation, all of which foster communicative competence. However, the textbook features these types of tasks only rarely.

The majority of tasks 65% fall into the semi-authentic category. These tasks simulate real-world contexts but remain teacher-scripted or heavily guided. For instance, activities that involve listening to a dialogue and answering comprehension questions may represent common situations (like asking for directions) but lack genuine communicative unpredictability. Rathert (2016) notes that semi-authentic tasks can scaffold learners' transition toward real-world language use by providing familiar contexts with pedagogical support. However Zhang (2020) cautions that over-simplified tasks may strip away important features of natural discourse, such as reduced forms, hesitations, or unpredictable responses. This is supported by findings from Blinova (2021), who emphasized that materials lacking authentic unpredictability may hinder learners' adaptability to real spoken input, despite being contextually themed.

Finally, 25% of tasks were identified as non-authentic. These consist of mechanical exercises such as matching, true-false questions, or completing short blanks without any real communicative purpose. According to Kimsesiz (2023) and Kochkorova (2025), non-authentic tasks do not promote interaction, contextual inference, or strategic processing, all of which are necessary for developing robust listening skills. Similarly, Mousavi & Irvani (2021) found that while non-authentic materials support controlled language practice, they do not contribute meaningfully to strategic listening or discourse comprehension. However, it might be compared to authentic or semi-authentic formats, non-authentic tasks offer limited communicative value and may restrict learners' readiness for spontaneous interactions. This finding is consistent with Fauziyah et al. (2025), who emphasized the need for exposure to extended, realistic input in order to build higher-level listening and inferencing skills.

Table 5. Authenticity of Listening Texts

Authenticity Level	Frequency	Percentage	Example
Authentic	8	40%	Informal dialogue on sleep habits (p.58)
Semi-authentic	10	50%	Simplified descriptions with questions (p.13)
Non-authentic	2	10%	Vocabulary lists without context (p.12)

Levels of Text Authenticity in Listening Materials

The analysis revealed that 40% of spoken texts were categorized as authentic. These texts closely resembled real-life spoken discourse, containing features such as spontaneous speech, informal expressions, hesitations, and natural speed. According to Gilmore (2018) authentic texts are defined by their original communicative purpose, not created specifically for classroom use, and provide learners with realistic exposure to language as used in daily life. Lembarek (2024) further notes that such materials improve learners' listening fluency and confidence, as they reflect actual communication. However, compared to findings by Prabowo et al. (2024), where students reported higher motivation and perceived usefulness of authentic materials in the learning process, the proportion of authentic texts in this textbook could still be increased to provide more immersive listening experiences.

Half of the texts in the textbook 50% were classified as semi-authentic. According to Rathert (2016), semi-authentic texts are pedagogically modified to facilitate comprehension while imitating the form and content of authentic texts. Domogen (2023) supports this by stating that semi-authentic materials serve as an effective transition between non-authentic input and full exposure to real-world discourse, especially for beginner or intermediate learners. Additionally, Chamba et al., (2019) and Poyonova et al., (2025) point out that although these texts may lack full spontaneity, they still offer valuable linguistic input by maintaining discourse patterns similar to those in authentic communication. In the analyzed textbook, the dominance of semi-authentic texts indicates an attempt to scaffold learners' listening comprehension progressively. This aligns with Romania and Martina, whose study found that most Indonesian EFL textbooks rely on semi-authentic content to balance realism and instructional clarity.

Only 10% of texts were categorized as non-authentic. These materials were scripted specifically for pedagogical use, often overly structured, predictable, and lacking in natural spoken features. Rathert (2016) describes non-authentic texts as those that fail to reflect natural language use, which may limit learners' ability to deal with spontaneous spoken English. Ikhtiari (2022) highlights that non-authentic materials tend to use simplified grammar and vocabulary that do not prepare students for the complexities of genuine communication. Compared with findings by Hanifa (2018), who noted a heavy reliance on non-authentic texts in older Indonesian textbooks, the relatively low percentage (10%) in this study reflects a notable improvement. It indicates a shift towards more authentic and communicative teaching approaches in the design of recent Indonesian EFL textbooks.

CONCLUSIONS

This study aimed to investigate the types and authenticity of listening activities in the Indonesian EFL textbook Bahasa Inggris untuk SMA/SMK/MAK Kelas X A published by

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Intan Pariwara by employing qualitative content analysis grounded in Breen's (1985) and Rathert's (2016) frameworks. The analysis addressed two research questions concerning the types of listening activities presented and the extent to which these activities reflect authenticity in tasks and texts. The findings revealed 20 listening activities consisting of selective listening (9), intensive listening (5), and responsive listening (6), with no extensive listening activities identified, indicating a strong emphasis on bottom-up listening skills focused on word- and sentence-level processing. While this approach supports basic listening abilities such as vocabulary development, pronunciation, and accuracy, it provides limited opportunities for global comprehension, inferencing, and engagement with real-life communication, particularly due to the absence of extended, spontaneous discourse. In terms of task authenticity, only 10% of the activities were fully authentic, 65% were semi-authentic, and 25% were non-authentic, suggesting that although semi-authentic tasks offer pedagogical scaffolding, genuine communicative engagement remains limited. Regarding text authenticity, 40% of the listening texts were authentic, 50% semi-authentic, and 10% non-authentic, reflecting partial alignment with authenticity principles but also highlighting the need for greater exposure to natural spoken discourse. Theoretically, these findings emphasize the importance of authentic materials in fostering communicative competence, while practically they suggest that teachers should complement textbooks with real-life audio sources and design tasks with genuine communicative purposes; however, as the study examined only one textbook and focused solely on listening skills, future research is encouraged to analyze multiple textbooks across levels or explore the impact of listening-task authenticity on learners' comprehension and classroom performance over time.

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