



Real Voices, Real Learning: Students' Perceptions of Authentic Listening Materials

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ABSTRACT

Listening comprehension is a critical skill in EFL education, yet it often receives less attention than other language skills. Traditional listening materials frequently fail to reflect real-world language use, limiting their effectiveness in developing learners' listening proficiency. Despite the recognized benefits of authentic listening materials, there is limited research on students' perceptions of their effectiveness in improving listening skills. This study aims to investigate the perceptions of MA Hidayatul Insan students regarding the use of authentic listening materials. Using a mixed-methods approach, data were collected through a structured questionnaire completed by 100 students and interviews with five participants. The findings reveal that students perceive authentic materials as engaging and beneficial for improving listening skills, vocabulary, and understanding of native speakers. However, challenges such as the difficulty level of the materials and lack of familiarity with native speech patterns were noted. The study concludes that incorporating authentic materials can enhance listening proficiency, emphasizing the need for tailored strategies to address these challenges.

Keywords: *Authentic Materials, EFL, Listening Comprehension, Student Perceptions*

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INTRODUCTION

Throughout history, language has been regarded as a universal means of communication essential for daily interactions. Essentially, individuals use language as a vital instrument to convey their thoughts and ideas clearly (Nishanthi, 2018). The development of listening comprehension skills is crucial in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) education. Listening is a crucial skill for learning English, requiring students to be attentive to the language being spoken (Renukadevi, 2014). Renukadevi also mentions that listening is more than just translating words individually; it involves a deeper comprehension of the overall meaning. In modern language classes around the world, there is a noticeable focus on developing students' speaking and listening skills. The understanding that English has become the universal language and that proficiency in the language is required is what motivates this emphasis (Yao & Du-Babcock, 2023). Because these language abilities are so important, it is necessary to critically analyse the dominant ideologies and teaching strategies used to foster their development. In recent decades, there has been a major evolution in the knowledge of the unique qualities of speaking and listening.

Popular movements in the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) field have had a significant impact on speaking, while listening has gotten relatively less attention (Kenza Tacarraoucht et al., 2022; Terzioglu & Kurt, 2022). Traditional EFL instruction often relies on scripted listening materials designed for pedagogical purposes, which may not adequately reflect the complexities of real-world language use. To effectively utilize and develop language, it is essential to focus on mastering the four macro skills: reading, listening, writing, and speaking (Khamkhien, 2010). Listening, in particular, is often regarded as one of the most

difficult skills to develop (Alzamil, 2021). This difficulty is especially evident in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) education, where listening skills are frequently neglected in favor of grammar, reading, and vocabulary (Hamouda, 2013). Huei-Chun Teng (1998) highlighted that EFL listening skills have been neglected due to the prevailing belief that listening is acquired automatically and permanently, leading to its underemphasis in language instruction. Listening is an active process that involves interpreting and understanding spoken information. Language skills are generally divided into receptive and productive categories. Speaking and writing are considered productive skills because they require a listener or reader to comprehend the conveyed message (input). On the other hand, listening is a receptive skill, allowing individuals to understand content at a higher level than they can produce. This distinction often leads to the misconception that listening is a passive skill (Dewi, 2018).

Currently, students perceive that listening activities are infrequent in EFL classrooms due to a lack of authentic listening materials and limited time dedicated to developing listening comprehension skills. The challenge in obtaining authentic listening materials arises because they need to align with school textbooks, which often lack a listening comprehension component (Gilakjani & Sabouri, 2016; Tuanany & Bharati, 2017). As a result, EFL students frequently struggle with listening comprehension, as it has traditionally been given inadequate attention by educators and textbook creators (Hamouda, 2013). Authentic resources are essential for language acquisition because they mirror real-life language usage and offer meaningful learning experiences (Shukurdinovna, 2024). Authentic listening materials, such as podcasts, interviews, and news broadcasts, are created for native speakers and offer more realistic language exposure. Despite their potential benefits, the adoption of authentic materials in EFL classrooms remains limited, partly due to a lack of understanding of learners' perceptions and experiences with these materials.

Advancements in technology have greatly increased access to authentic materials, enhancing language learning through a variety of engaging resources (Ashcroft et al., 2018). This progress offers teachers and students extensive collections of authentic content, improving language exposure and learning effectiveness (Chamba et al., 2019). Developing and integrating relevant materials is essential in language instruction, as it boosts students' motivation and interest (Seven, 2020). A study by Gönülal (2020) demonstrated that extensive listening practice using podcasts and vodcasts outside the classroom significantly enhanced learners' listening skills, pronunciation, and vocabulary. Investigating students' experiences and opinions on using podcasts for independent learning, Rosyidah et al. (2021) discovered that students favored podcasts due to their ease of use, the variety of topics available, and the authenticity of the conversations. Additionally, recent research by Dwi et al. (2021) indicated that this approach aids students in better understanding summary writing, acquiring new vocabulary, and comprehending native speakers' speeches more effectively. All language learners encounter challenges when listening to their target language, but the nature and extent of these difficulties vary.

These differences have been the subject of many listening comprehension research. Goh (2000: 56), for example, discovered that a number of things can affect listening difficulties. Background knowledge, phonological traits, and speech rate are important research topics. Text structure and grammar, as well as individual problems including insufficient exposure to the target language and a lack of interest and motivation, are other factors associated with listening difficulties. Furthermore, listening is one of the most difficult abilities to teach and learn in foreign language instruction, which results in generally poor proficiency levels. In response, Martinez (2002: 21) said that "it is appropriate to use authentic materials in teaching listening in order to overcome this difficulty, improve our students' listening skills, and prepare them for real listening situations." To address these challenges, learners need to recognize the importance of mastering listening skills in second or foreign language acquisition. By doing so, they will hopefully practice listening both inside and outside the classroom, leading to gradual improvement.

There are some definitions of authentic listening materials refer to resources created by native speakers for real-world communication purposes. According to Genhard (1996), these materials encompass real-life communication scenarios, ranging from newspaper articles to audio recordings. Widdowson (2003) further defines authentic materials as real-life resources such as news broadcasts, songs, and movie clips, originally intended for native speakers. Kilikaya (2004) described authentic materials as the opportunity to encounter real language as it is naturally used within its community. Their integration in language teaching fosters learner engagement and interest, as they reflect natural language use (Soliman, 2013). Additionally, Krashen's Input Hypothesis (1987) emphasizes the role of natural listening input in language acquisition, asserting that exposure to authentic materials facilitates linguistic competence. Authentic materials expose learners to natural speech patterns, aiding in comprehension of variations in pronunciation, speed, and slang. Belaidi (2015) found that educators frequently use these materials due to their motivational value. Moreover, practicing with real-world content boosts learners' confidence and prepares them for everyday interactions (Rao, 2019).

Perception refers to the process of observing and interpreting stimuli to create meaningful understanding (Walgito, 2010). Factors such as motivation, engagement, and confidence influence how learners perceive authentic materials. Authentic resources can enhance motivation by reflecting real-life language use, fostering cultural immersion, and connecting learners with the target language community (Rasheed, 2014). Learners often perceive authentic materials as challenging due to factors like natural speech speed, idiomatic language, and unfamiliar accents. These difficulties may hinder comprehension, particularly for those with lower proficiency levels. Authentic materials are perceived as relevant when they mirror real-life language use, making the learning experience meaningful and practical.

Listening comprehension is a foundational skill in language acquisition, involving both top-down and bottom-up processes to decode and understand speech (Cross, 2018). It requires critical thinking, focused attention, and an openness to various perspectives (EDU SSRU, 2014). Effective teaching strategies prioritize listening as a core skill, as it supports broader language development and facilitates meaningful communication (Novika et al., 2020).

Understanding learners' perceptions of authentic materials can guide teaching strategies. If learners find these materials helpful, educators should incorporate them into lessons. Conversely, if learners struggle, scaffolding and gradual introduction may be necessary. By aligning teaching practices with students' psychological needs and feedback, educators can create a supportive environment that fosters engagement and improves language acquisition. Based on this issue the researcher conducted two research problems to this study 1) How do EFL learners view the effectiveness of using authentic listening materials in improving their listening skills? 2) What are EFL learners' experiences and preferences with authentic listening materials?

METHOD

This research used a mixed-methods technique. In order to address complicated research problems, researchers can utilize the strengths of both quantitative and qualitative methodologies by combining them in a single study through the collection, analysis, and integration of both types of data (Creswell and Clark, 2018). This research on Perceptions of MA Hidayatul Insan Students on Using Authentic Listening Materials, mixed-method research is highly suitable for exploring the multifaceted nature of learners' perceptions. Surveys were used to collect quantitative data, focusing on students' perceptions and attitudes toward the use of authentic listening materials in language learning. This method enabled the gathering of numerical data, which was then analysed statistically to identify trends and patterns in students' perspectives. Additionally, qualitative methods, such as interviews, were conducted to gain deeper insights into students' experiences, exploring their motivations, challenges, and overall engagement with authentic listening materials in language learning. The data collection process began with the distribution of a questionnaire to students, followed

by interviews to further investigate their experiences and perspectives. This mixed-methods approach allowed researchers to triangulate the data (Cohen et al., 2018) by comparing and contrasting the quantitative survey results with the qualitative insights obtained from interviews. By utilizing this comprehensive method, researchers sought to gain a holistic understanding of students' perceptions and attitudes toward authentic listening materials.

Respondents

The respondents of this study were MA Hidayatul Insan students from the 10th, 11th, and 12th grades, representing diverse proficiency levels and backgrounds. A quantitative sample of 100 students was selected using stratified random sampling to ensure representation from all grade levels, capturing a wide range of experiences and attitudes toward authentic listening materials. For the qualitative phase, data were gathered through interviews with five students from different grades, chosen based on varied perspectives or notable experiences identified in the survey.

Instruments

The research instruments included a structured questionnaire for the quantitative method. The questionnaire used in this study was adapted from Sabet and Mahsefat (2012), to assess students' perceptions of the effectiveness and usefulness of authentic listening materials. For the qualitative method, an interview guide featuring open-ended questions was used. The guide was informed by themes identified in the survey, allowing the interviews to explore these issues in greater depth and provide richer insights.

Procedures

The data collection procedure began with the distribution of a questionnaire to 100 students from grades 10, 11, and 12 at MA Hidayatul Insan, representing various levels of English proficiency. The questionnaire, consisting of 29 items, was distributed both online and offline to ensure broader reach and convenience for the participants. The reliability of the questionnaire was confirmed with a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.85, indicating high internal consistency across the items. These results provide a strong foundation for understanding students' views and experiences with authentic listening materials. After collecting the questionnaire responses, semi-structured interviews were conducted with five selected students to gather more detailed insights into their experiences. The interviews provided an opportunity to explore students' perceptions in depth, complementing the quantitative data from the questionnaires. This combination of data collection methods ensured a comprehensive understanding of students' perceptions of authentic listening materials.

Data analysis

The survey data were analysed using descriptive statistics, to identify trends in students' perceptions of authentic listening materials. This approach helped explain their attitudes and experiences with these materials. SPSS was used to ensure accurate and efficient analysis, and the results were presented through tables clarity. For the qualitative data, the analysis was conducted using the Miles and Huberman model, which consists of three stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. This approach facilitated a structured analysis, ensuring that valuable insights were effectively obtained.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the findings on EFL learners' perceptions of authentic listening materials. The results, drawn from both qualitative and quantitative data, highlight learners' experiences with these materials, their preferences, and challenges faced during their use. The discussion focuses on how authentic materials impact listening skills, motivation, and cultural understanding.

Table 1. Results of The Questionnaire

No	Items	Options				
		SD (Strongly Disagree)	DA (Disagree)	N (Neutral)	A (Agree)	SA (Strongly Agree)
1	I would rather listen to authentic English materials than those included in the course book.	2%	8%	39%	32%	19%
2	I prefer listening to simplified materials available in the course book.	2%	8%	42%	40%	8%
3	I prefer combining authentic English materials in my listening practice.	3%	8%	42%	32%	15%
4	I choose to avoid using simplified listening materials from the course book	7%	37%	32%	21%	3%
5	I would rather not use authentic listening materials	7%	31%	42%	18%	6%
6	I choose not to use a mix of authentic English listening materials	7%	30%	41%	17%	5%
7	I rarely listen to English unless it is necessary.	7%	23%	32%	26%	13%
8	Listening to authentic materials enhances my language skills.	0%	8%	25%	49%	12%
9	The authentic materials used in class are simpler compared to non-authentic ones	2%	19%	41%	29%	9%
10	I find the authentic materials in class more engaging than non-authentic ones.	1%	11%	41%	41%	6%
11	Listening to authentic materials helps me understand other materials beyond the classroom.	4%	9%	40%	36%	11%
12	The authentic listening materials used in the listening course motivate me to explore additional materials outside the classroom.	5%	7%	37%	37%	14%
13	Listening to authentic materials exposes me to real-world language use.	8%	8%	35%	38%	11%
14	Authentic listening materials expose me to real-world language use.	3%	8%	28%	44%	17%
15	Authentic listening materials enhance my language skills more effectively than other types of materials.	2%	11%	41%	31%	12%
16	My listening comprehension improves more with authentic materials compared to non-authentic ones.	3%	9%	42%	39%	7%
17	Listening to authentic materials enhances my speaking skills more than non-authentic materials.	0%	11%	37%	40%	12%
18	Through authentic materials, I become more familiar with grammar rules in their natural context.	4%	3%	29%	48%	16%
19	Listening to authentic materials expands my vocabulary for real-life communication.	2%	4%	29%	46%	19%
20	I find authentic listening materials challenging to understand.	8%	31%	42%	16%	3%

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21	Authentic listening materials inspire me to engage in more listening activities beyond the classroom.	3%	7%	43%	33%	14%
22	TV commercials	3%	14%	45%	30%	9%
23	Cartoons	0%	7%	26%	49%	18%
24	News clips	6%	11%	40%	28%	15%
25	Movies	1%	2%	24%	44%	29%
26	Taped short stories and novels	10%	14%	28%	36%	12%
27	Radio ads	17%	20%	44%	17%	2%
28	Music	1%	3%	28%	34%	34%
29	What medium do you use most often to obtain authentic listening material?	2%	9%	35%	50%	4%
	a) TV					
	b) Radio	17%	29%	42%	12%	0%
	c) Films	1%	1%	19%	53%	26%
	d) Internet	0%	0%	14%	43%	43%

The data reveals that participants generally have a positive perception of authentic listening materials in English language learning. A significant portion (51%) prefers using authentic materials over course book materials, suggesting that real-world content is valued. In contrast, only 48% favour simplified listening materials, indicating a lesser interest in content that is more controlled and less reflective of natural language use. Furthermore, 47% of participants prefer a combination of authentic materials, implying that a mixed approach may be most effective for some learners. Authentic materials are seen as effective for improving language proficiency, particularly in comprehension and vocabulary acquisition, with 61% of participants agreeing. They also find these materials more interesting (47% agree) and motivating, encouraging them to engage with additional resources outside the classroom (47% agree). Authentic listening materials are credited with increasing familiarity with grammar and vocabulary used in real-world contexts, with 64% of respondents expressing agreement. As for the mediums through which they access authentic materials, TV (50%), films (53%), and the internet (43%) are the most commonly used platforms, with radio (42%) also being a popular choice. While the majority of participants do not find authentic materials difficult to understand, a small group (16%) report challenges with comprehension, indicating that more support may be needed for those struggling with these materials. Overall, the findings suggest that authentic materials are highly regarded for their ability to enhance language skills, though it is important to consider the varying needs of learners to ensure effective implementation.

Table 2. Descriptive statistics of the respondents' responses to statements

No	Items	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	I would rather listen to authentic English materials than those included in the course book.	3.52	0.926
2	I prefer listening to simplified materials available in the course book.	3.44	0.832
3	I prefer combining authentic English materials in my listening practice.	3.48	0.947
4	I choose to avoid using simplified listening materials from the course book	2.75	0.957
5	I would rather not use authentic listening materials	2.84	0.992
6	I choose not to use a mix of authentic English listening materials	2.83	0.964
7	I rarely listen to English unless it is necessary.	3.12	1.112

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8	Listening to authentic materials enhances my language skills.	3.76	0.842
9	The authentic materials used in class are simpler compared to non-authentic ones	3.24	0.933
10	I find the authentic materials in class more engaging than non-authentic ones.	3.39	0.802
11	Listening to authentic materials helps me understand other materials beyond the classroom.	3.41	0.943
12	The authentic listening materials used in the listening course motivate me to explore additional materials outside the classroom.	3.47	0.989
13	Listening to authentic materials exposes me to real-world language use.	3.35	1.048
14	Authentic listening materials expose me to real-world language use.	3.63	0.960
15	Authentic listening materials enhance my language skills more effectively than other types of materials.	3.42	0.912
16	My listening comprehension improves more with authentic materials compared to non-authentic ones.	3.37	0.860
17	Listening to authentic materials enhances my speaking skills more than non-authentic materials.	3.52	0.846
18	Through authentic materials, I become more familiar with grammar rules in their natural context.	3.68	0.919
19	Listening to authentic materials expands my vocabulary for real-life communication.	3.75	0.880
20	I find authentic listening materials challenging to understand.	2.75	0.925
21	Authentic listening materials inspire me to engage in more listening activities beyond the classroom	3.46	0.914
22	TV commercials.	3.28	0.911
23	Cartoons.	3.77	0.827
24	News clips.	3.34	1.056
25	Movies.	3.97	0.846
26	Taped short stories and novels.	3.25	1.149
27	Radio ads.	2.66	1.007
28	Music.	3.95	0.914
29	TV	3.44	0.795
30	Radio	2.49	0.915
31	Films	4.02	0.765
32	Internet	4.27	0.708

The data reveals that students generally prefer authentic listening materials over simplified coursebook materials, with a moderate preference for authentic content (mean = 3.52). While some students show a slight preference for simplified materials (mean = 3.44), they are less likely to avoid authentic materials or combinations of authentic content (mean scores for these items range from 2.75 to 2.83). However, many students do not actively seek out English listening materials unless required, as shown by the mean of 3.12 for the statement "I rarely listen to English unless it is necessary." When it comes to the perceived benefits of authentic materials, students hold positive views, particularly about how these materials help improve language proficiency, listening comprehension, speaking skills, and familiarity with grammar in real-world contexts, with means ranging from 3.37 to 3.76. While some students find authentic materials challenging (mean = 2.75), this challenge does not outweigh the perceived benefits. Moreover, authentic materials seem to motivate students to engage with additional materials outside of class, as reflected by means of 3.46 to 3.47, and they find value in learning how language is used in real-life settings (mean = 3.35). Films (mean = 4.02) and music (mean = 3.95) are the most favoured types of authentic materials, with cartoons (mean = 3.77) and TV commercials (mean = 3.28) being less commonly used. Radio and radio ads are the least favoured, with means of 2.49 and 2.66, respectively. When it comes to accessing authentic materials, students predominantly use the internet (mean = 4.27), followed by films (mean = 4.02), with TV (mean = 3.44) and radio (mean = 2.49) being less popular. The average perception score of 3.37 indicates that participants generally have a positive view of authentic listening materials in English learning. However, there is some variability in the responses, as reflected in the average standard deviation of 0.94. This suggests that while many participants favour the use of authentic materials, there are differences in how strongly they feel about

their effectiveness and preferences compared to other types of materials (e.g., simplified or combined materials).

Based on research question 1 about *How do EFL learners view the effectiveness of using authentic listening materials in improving their listening skills?* This research found that EFL learners widely regard authentic listening materials as highly effective in improving their listening skills, as supported by both survey results and interview findings. Survey data reveal that learners perceive authentic materials as instrumental in enhancing listening comprehension (Mean = 3.68) and their ability to understand complex materials (Mean = 3.75). This is echoed in the interviews, where most of the learners reported notable improvements in listening comprehension, pronunciation, and vocabulary acquisition. For instance, one participant (OI R3) shared, *"Listening helps me understand how words are pronounced,"* highlighting how exposure to native speakers aids pronunciation, this data showing how authentic materials enhance both listening comprehension and pronunciation, supporting Krashen's theory that exposure to real language helps develop these skills. The findings of this study align with previous research on the benefits of authentic materials in language learning. Treve (2023) found that ESL/EFL learners exposed to authentic materials outperformed those relying on traditional textbook instruction, demonstrating significant improvements in listening comprehension, vocabulary acquisition, and overall language proficiency.

Similarly, the results of this study indicate that EFL learners perceive authentic listening materials as effective in enhancing their listening skills, as they provide exposure to natural speech patterns, diverse accents, and real-world language use. Similarly, learners emphasized the practical benefits of using authentic materials, such as English songs, films, and podcasts, which enable them to understand native speakers better and apply newly learned vocabulary in real-life contexts. Metruk (2018) revealed that students frequently used authentic English videos for listening practice and perceived them as highly beneficial for improving listening skills. The study underscores the value of integrating authentic materials into EFL learning. Authentic materials were also noted for their motivational and confidence-boosting impact. Survey responses show that learners believe these materials enhance their motivation to learn English (Mean = 3.47) and increase their confidence in communicating in English (Mean = 3.63). Interviews supported these data, with one participant (PA R5) expressing, *"It makes me more motivated to learn English,"* while another (NAR R1) stated, *"It made us closer because of the language,"* reflecting the confidence gained in using English in real-world situations.

Additionally, authentic materials were valued for their cultural insights, with learners reporting a deeper understanding of idioms, humour, and cultural expressions. For example, one participant (PA R5) mentioned, *"Listening to English songs helps me understand the culture,"* underscoring how these materials bridge the gap between classroom learning and practical language use. The findings are aligned with previous research, suggesting that exposure to authentic listening materials improves students' motivation and cultural awareness by Husnawati et al. (2024) underlined that authentic learning materials increase student engagement, intrinsic motivation, and cultural awareness. The study revealed that ALM makes knowledge more accessible and practical to real-life situations, hence closing the gap between classroom learning and real-world application.

Based on research question 2 about *What are EFL learners' experiences and preferences with authentic listening materials?* The researcher found that EFL learners express a strong preference for multimedia-based authentic materials, such as movies and music, due to their accessibility, relatability, and entertainment value. Survey data reveal that movies (Mean = 4.5) and music (Mean = 4.3) are the most favoured materials, as they align with learners' personal interests and provide an enjoyable learning experience. This preference is echoed in the interviews, where one participant (FA R2) stated, *"I like music and movies because they're casual and easier to understand."* Previous study by Bokiev et al. (2018) argue that music and songs can enhance language learning by increasing motivation, reducing anxiety, and fostering cultural awareness, making them effective authentic listening materials in ESL classrooms. This result of the study also supported by Arévalo, 2010, pp.130-131) stated that songs make language

learning more engaging and effective by involving students in interactive and reflective processes as they discover the songs' content and meaning for themselves. The use of movies in ESL/EFL classrooms helps learners develop listening comprehension skills, as they are exposed to natural pronunciation, intonation, and conversational speech patterns. Additionally, English movies enhance learners' engagement and motivation, making language learning more enjoyable and effective. Furthermore, English movies provide learners with contextualized language input and insights into cultural aspects, which align with the role of authentic materials in language acquisition (Rao, 2019). English movies increase learners' engagement and motivation, making language learning more enjoyable and effective. Moreover, they provide contextualized language input and cultural insights, reinforcing the role of authentic materials in language acquisition (Rao, 2019). Similarly, Tuanany (2019) stated that when authentic materials align with learners' needs and proficiency levels, they create an enjoyable and relaxed learning environment. Unlike conventional textbook exercises, learners perceive authentic materials as dynamic, interactive, and immersive, offering a more realistic language learning experience that connects classroom instruction with real-world communication.

Despite these advantages, learners face challenges when engaging with authentic materials. The survey indicates a moderate difficulty level (Mean = 2.75), with specific obstacles such as understanding fast speech, unfamiliar accents, and slang specifically authentic materials which is podcast that found in this research. Previous research conducted by Cao and Bui (2023) found that university students in Vietnam generally viewed Podcasts positively as authentic listening materials. They believed Podcasts helped improve listening skills, made learning more engaging, and allowed flexible practice outside the classroom. Since the study focused on intermediate-level English students, these learners likely had enough language exposure to understand authentic spoken English more easily. However, the findings of the present study reveal a contrasting perspective, particularly among three respondents, who found Podcasts difficult to understand due to fast speech and unfamiliar vocabulary. Interview responses provide further insight into these difficulties. In total there were three learners shared, *"I find podcasts harder to understand because the vocabulary can be unfamiliar and they speak very fast."* (PA R5). *"I find podcasts or news a bit hard to understand because they are more formal and often harder to follow. Some materials, like podcasts, are less interesting compared to movies or songs, but they can still be useful."* (OI R3) reflecting the challenges posed by advanced language features. Explanation for this contrast is the difference in learners' English proficiency levels. While some students in this study were comfortable with authentic listening materials, others especially those with lower listening proficiency struggled to process rapid, natural speech without additional support. This suggests that Podcasts may be more accessible to intermediate or advanced learners, whereas lower-proficiency students may require scaffolding techniques, such as transcripts, controlled exposure to authentic materials, or gradual progression from simplified to more complex input. However, learners demonstrate resilience by adopting strategies to overcome these barriers, such as replaying audio, using subtitles, and translating unfamiliar vocabulary. For example, one participant (OI R3) mentioned, *"I replay or translate parts I don't understand,"* showcasing their active efforts to make the materials comprehensible.

Autonomy emerges as a critical aspect of learners' experiences with authentic materials. Many students value the freedom to choose materials that match their interests, mood, and pace of learning. The study by Fatimah et al. (2021) highlights the learner's positive perception of authentic listening materials, as they were seen as more enjoyable, accessible, and useful for vocabulary acquisition compared to classroom-based listening activities. The participant's ability to integrate listening practice into daily life through mobile technology further underscores the potential of authentic materials in promoting self-directed learning. By demonstrating that learners perceive authentic listening materials as engaging and effective, Fatimah et al. (2021) provide valuable insights into how technology and real-world audio resources contribute to listening skill development. Survey responses also indicate a

preference for a combination of authentic and simplified materials (Mean = 3.48) to accommodate learners' varying proficiency levels. Most of the respondents emphasize that authentic materials provide practical exposure to everyday English, offering real-world language use.

CONCLUSIONS

The research shows that EFL learners find authentic listening materials, such as music, movies, and podcasts, very helpful for improving their listening skills. These materials improve listening comprehension, vocabulary, pronunciation, and real-life language use. Learners enjoy them because they are engaging and connected to real-world language. They prefer informal, multimedia resources over traditional textbooks, as they are more interesting and practical. Authentic materials also provide cultural insights and help learners build confidence in communication. However, the study has some limitations. The small sample size makes it hard to generalize the findings, and it doesn't look at how individual differences (like proficiency levels or learning styles) affect the effectiveness of these materials. The challenges of fast speech, accents, and slang were mentioned but not fully explored. There is also no comparison with traditional materials to see if authentic materials are more effective. Learners use strategies like re-listening and subtitles to overcome difficulties, but the study doesn't explore how teachers can support students who struggle with self-directed learning. In conclusion, authentic materials are effective for improving language skills, increasing motivation, and offering cultural exposure. Teachers should use them in lessons and provide support for learners to handle challenges. More research with larger groups and comparisons with traditional methods is needed.

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