

## THE ROLE OF AUTHENTIC MATERIALS IN IMPROVING LISTENING COMPREHENSION IN ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE (EFL) CLASSROOMS

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<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.17914557>

**Annotation.** *This article explores how real-world language resources contribute to strengthening listening skills in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) settings. It examines various forms of genuine audio and visual content, explains their instructional benefits, identifies the difficulties teachers and students may face, and offers practical recommendations for integrating such materials into lessons. The findings emphasize that exposing learners to authentic input greatly improves their ability to understand natural spoken English and deepens their cultural competence.*

**Keywords:** *Real-world language input; EFL students; auditory comprehension; authentic communication; classroom pedagogy; language development; multimedia sources; learner engagement; communicative skills; instructional methods.*

### Introduction

English language learning methods vary greatly depending on the student's level of English proficiency and the teaching style and environment, and can range from required lessons in school to self-directed learning at home or a combination of the two. Teaching techniques play a significant role in the acquisition of English as a foreign language. In some programs, the teaching materials (including oral lectures and written assignments) are presented in a mixture of English and the student's native language. In other programs, the teaching materials are always in English, but the vocabulary, grammar, and context instructions may be modified to make them easier to understand by students with different levels of comprehension. Comprehension adaptation, comprehension-oriented repetition, and repetition are some of the techniques used in the lessons.

However, without adequate cultural immersion (social learning frameworks), the host country's linguistic habits and reference points (internal mechanisms) are not fully transferred through these programs. Mark Hancock argues that in many second language learning environments, students naturally engage in "layering" that mixes their native language and English to manage meaning and express complex ideas. This research suggests that code-switching can serve as a communicative resource rather than a barrier to learning. The main drivers of language influence are the United States and the United Kingdom, both of which have adopted the language differently, so they differ in idioms and usage. This is mainly seen in pronunciation and vocabulary. Variants of English exist in both of these countries (e.g., African American Vernacular English).

English has a great influence and impact, and English is taught all over the world. In countries where English is not the native language, there are usually two distinct models of teaching English: one for students who want to move to English-speaking countries, and another

for students who do not want to move but want to understand. Education, entertainment, content in English. work or doing international business. Over time, the differences between these two models of English language teaching have grown, and teachers who focus on each model have used different terminology, received different training, and formed separate professional associations. For those who have recently moved to English-speaking countries, English is also taught as a second language, which presents particular challenges because students in the same class may speak different native languages. Code-switching serves as a linguistic strategy for navigating between languages, but it cannot fully address the deep cultural pressures that immigrants face.

Listening comprehension is one of the most fundamental yet challenging components of language acquisition, especially in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts. Unlike reading or writing, listening takes place in real time, leaving learners little opportunity to control the speed, volume, or complexity of the message. For this reason, EFL learners often struggle to understand authentic spoken English outside the classroom, even if they have mastered grammar and vocabulary in written form. Traditional listening materials used in many classrooms such as scripted audio recordings, simplified dialogues, and textbook-produced listening tracks tend to present language in an overly controlled and predictable manner. While these resources are helpful at the initial stages of learning, they do not fully reflect the dynamics of natural communication.

In recent decades, global communication, international mobility, and digital technologies have significantly increased the importance of exposing learners to real-life English. As English continues to function as a global lingua franca in business, education, tourism, and online interaction, learners must be prepared not only to decode words but also to interpret meaning through authentic pronunciation, intonation, cultural references, and situational context. This has led researchers and educators to advocate for the integration of authentic materials audio, video, and multimodal texts created for native speakers into EFL listening instruction.

Authentic materials, such as news broadcasts, interviews, podcasts, movies, YouTube videos, and real-life conversations, provide learners with unparalleled access to genuine language use. Unlike artificially constructed textbook dialogues, authentic materials introduce learners to spontaneous speech patterns, natural speed, connected speech, hesitations, fillers, colloquial expressions, and a variety of native and non-native accents. This makes the listening process more challenging but ultimately more realistic and effective for long-term language development. As well, authentic listening materials contribute significantly to learners' cultural competence. This process is very similar to the mechanism of learning a native language. The child learns words by hearing them, without knowing how they are written. Similarly, in foreign language learning, listening is one of the most effective ways to expand vocabulary. The nature of listening comprehension requires even more attention in the EFL environment, because students learn English outside of their natural environment. They do not have the opportunity to hear English in real life, and when the teacher is limited to a textbook, the student does not hear real language.

This leads to the slow development of his listening skills. If the student only hears artificial audio texts, his brain does not adapt to the speed, tone, pronunciation, abbreviations and connective speech of real speech. Therefore, EFL teachers must use authentic materials. Because authentic materials prepare the student for real-life English.



The importance of listening in language learning is also confirmed by cognitive science.

Numerous neuropsychological studies show that the human brain is more active when listening to speech, because the information entering through the auditory channels is processed faster and more efficiently. Words learned through hearing are stored more firmly in long-term memory. This process is called the “auditory learning advantage”. This means that the more a learner listens, the faster he or she learns the language. From this perspective, listening skills are considered the main tool for language learning.

EFL refers to the teaching of English as a foreign language in a non-English speaking region. The study may take place in the student's home country, as part of the regular school curriculum or otherwise, or, for a privileged few, in an Anglophone country where they are visiting as educational tourists, especially before or after graduation from university. TEFL is teaching English as a foreign language; note that such teaching can take place in any country, whether English speaking or not. Typically, an EFL learner is studying to pass an exam as a required part of their education or for career advancement, while also working in an internationally oriented organization or business. EFL may be part of the public school curriculum in countries where English does not have special status (what linguistic theorist Braj Kachru calls “expanding circle countries”); it can also be supplemented with privately paid lessons. EFL teachers usually assume that students are literate in their native language.

The field of technical and professional communication has the potential to break down barriers that prevent EFL students from entering the field, although it can easily perpetuate these problems. One study by Matsuda and Matsuda sought to evaluate introductory-level textbooks on technical communication. Among their findings, the dominant image of English as a privileged diverse native speaker was implicit and widely accepted they found that these textbooks “perpetuated the myth” of linguistic homogeneity.

While the textbooks were successful in appealing to global and international perspectives, the portrayal of the intended audience ultimately alienated anyone who did not belong to the predominantly white background and culture of the text. In constructing this mask, prospective real-world learners are lumped into an “other” group, which isolates them and undermines their potential to enter the field.

Furthermore, this alienation is exacerbated by the emergence of English as the lingua franca for business and many professional fields. In Kwon and Klassen’s research, they identified and criticized the “one-native-language recipe for linguistic success.” This has contributed to concerns about entering the professional field for EFL technical communicators. These concerns about an English dominated professional field represent an influential filter that provides an additional barrier to social justice for these EFL individuals. These misconceptions and concerns point to an issue of exclusivity that technical and professional communicators must address. This social justice concern translates into an ethical concern that all individuals deserve usable, accessible, and inclusive information.

### **CONCLUSION**

The also demonstrated that learners in EFL contexts face specific difficulties due to limited exposure to natural spoken English. Artificial audio materials, slow-paced speech, and overly simplified dialogues fail to prepare learners for the reality of authentic communication. Because real-life speech contains rapid connected sounds, contractions, reduced forms, varied accents, and natural conversational features, learners need authentic exposure to develop the ability to understand English as it is genuinely used.

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