

## BRINGING MOVIES INTO THE LISTENING CLASSROOM TO INTRODUCE AUTHENTIC MATERIAL TO THE EFL STUDENTS

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### ABSTRAK

Film menawarkan banyak kelebihan guna meningkatkan kemampuan listening pada kelas EFL (bahasa Inggris sebagai bahasa asing). Bahasanya dibuat sealami mungkin seperti penutur asli sehingga dapat dianggap sebagai materi bahasa yang authentic (asli). Beberapa materi pengajaran diberikan dalam kecepatan lambat dan sejelas mungkin guna kepentingan pendidikan, tetapi siswa juga diharapkan untuk dapat menyesuaikan diri dengan bahasa yang diucapkan secara alami. Karena mereka tidak tinggal di lingkungan dimana bahasa Inggris dianggap sebagai bahasa kedua, film dapat memberikan tambahan masukan untuk siswa yang seharusnya mereka dapatkan juga dari lingkungan diluar kelas mereka. Terlebih lagi film tersajikan dalam video, sehingga memungkinkan mereka menyaksikan intonasi berpadu dengan ekspresi wajah dan bahasa isyarat bersamaan dengan ucapan tertentu. Tindakan sosial dan situasi tertentu yang tak terucapkan lebih mudah dilihat dalam film daripada penjelasan dalam buku. Walaupun demikian para guru perlu memperhitungkan bahwa siswa sering menonton film dirumah dengan penuh rasa santai. Guru harus memberikan pertunjukan yang baik dan disertai soal latihan mendengarkan sehingga mereka akan memberikan perhatian yang penuh tentang apa yang mereka dengar dan perhatikan. Selanjutnya guru harus menyajikan film dalam waktu yang singkat. Hal ini disebabkan karena daya ingatan manusia dalam menyimpan informasi terbatas, jadi sangatlah penting memberikan latihan soal mendengarkan untuk para siswa dengan batasan waktu untuk menghindari kehilangan informasi. Tidak semua gambar dalam film sesuai untuk digunakan latihan mendengarkan, sehingga perlu adanya pemilihan dan penyesuaian sebelum diberikan kepada siswa yang diharapkan akan membantu guru dalam

memberikan materi mendengarkan yang baik untuk meningkatkan kemampuan mendengarkan para siswa.

**Kata kunci :** film, mendengarkan, video, materi authentic

### ABSTRACT

Movies offer some advantages for enhancing listening skills in EFL (English as Foreign Language) classroom. The language is designed to sound natural to the native speaker and thus they do represent authentic language. Some teaching materials are presented in artificially slow and clear language, but at some point students need to be able to deal with language as it is naturally spoken. Since they do not live in an ESL context, movies to some extent substitute for the input of students they cannot get from outside the classroom. Moreover movies provide videos, this will allow them to see intonation matches facial expression and what gestures to accompany certain utterances. Unspoken social behavior and situation are easier to see on film than to describe in a book. However teachers need to be aware that students often see film/movie at home with full relaxation. Teacher have to provide them with good viewing and listening task so they will give full attention to what they are hearing and seeing. Furthermore teachers should present the movies in short duration. It is because the capacity of human's memory in storing information might be limited, so it is necessary to provide the students with some listening activities and task with a certain period of time to avoid missing information. Not all of the captions in movies are appropriate for practicing listening, therefore selecting and editing the caption to be presented to the students will help the teacher in providing good listening material in improving the students' listening proficiencies.

**Key words:** movies, listening, video, authentic material

### BACKGROUND

Brown (2001:59) in his book *Teaching by Principles*, states that

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students attend the course because it is fun, interesting, challenging and not because they need some knowledge. The teaching and learning listening has been done in various techniques, such as by doing completion, dictation, paraphrasing, note-taking, and others. In this occasion, I would like to introduce the students to motion pictures or short movies as the media of listening.

Some people consider that the four language skills are reading, writing, listening, and speaking. These four skills should be mastered integrally by the students who learn English. These skills are often divided into two types. Harmer says (2007a: 265) that receptive skill is a term used for reading and listening, skill where meaning is extracted from discourse. Productive skill refers to speaking and writing skills where students actually have to produce the language.

Teaching listening skills is one of the most difficult tasks for many English teachers. This is because successful listening skills are acquired over time and with lots of practice. It's frustrating for students because there are no rules as in grammar teaching. Speaking and writing also have very specific

exercises that can lead to improved skills. This is not to say that there are no ways of improving listening skill, however they are difficult to quantify.

One of the largest problems for students is often mental block. While listening, a student suddenly decides that he or she doesn't understand what is being said. At this point, many students just tune out or get caught up in an internal dialogue trying to translate a specific word. Some students convince themselves that they are not able to understand spoken English well and create problems for themselves.

The key to helping students improve their listening skills is to convince them that not understanding is fine. This is more of an attitude adjustment than anything else, and it is easier for some students to accept than others. Another important point that I try to teach my students (with differing amounts of success) is that they need to listen to English as often as possible, but for short periods of time.

Since the listening skill cannot be acquired instantly, the students need to practice listening as often as possible. The problem for Indonesian students is that they

cannot hear English every time, because they commonly use English for communicate only in the academic area where they learn English. So it is important to encourage the student to get additional material outside of their classroom.

Fortunately, there are many sources of learning English. There are films, songs, news reports, talk shows, English radio station, etc. to encourage the students to get a film, or listen to the dialogue, but not to watch an entire film two hours. Students should often listen, but they should listen for short periods - five to ten minutes. This should happen four or five times a week. Even if they don't understand anything, five to ten minutes is a minor investment. However, for this strategy to work, students must not expect improved understanding too quickly. The brain is capable of amazing things if given time; students must have the patience to wait for results. If a student continues this exercise over two to three months their listening comprehension skills will greatly improve.

Liou, Katchen, and Wang (Eds.) (2003), also explain that video, or particular films, offers some advantages for enhancing

listening skills. Although films are scripted, they are made to sound natural to the native speaker and thus they do represent authentic language. Too much teaching material is presented in artificially slow and clear language, but at some point students need to be able to deal with language as it is naturally spoken. Since they do not live in an ESL context, films to some extent substitute for the input of students they cannot get from outside the classroom.

Instead of producing authentic language, the situation which is presented in the form of video gives more beneficial to the students. On the video they can see the characters' body movements or gestures following the utterance spoken by them. Thus the students will get some experience how some people interact in certain situation. It is because practicing listening is not only understanding the meaning of the words by words but it is also about understanding speakers meaning, explicitly or implicitly and this can only be reached if the students understand the context of satiation. Therefore in this paper I intent to describe the use of video in teaching and learning listening.

## THE TEACHING OF LISTENING

There are obviously many differences among the students we teach all over the world. Concerning to the background differences, the students also have different attitudes in their classroom. Thomson (2005) says that some teachers find that their students are often busy talking and chatting among others and do not concentrate on the listening subject. We know that in listening students need full concentration on the audio being played, otherwise they may not catch the messages from the audio. Some students have low motivations because they are forced to be in the class and because their own willingness. Some of them have problem on concentration and find listening is more difficult than other subjects. Students simply turn off when listening to spoken English as it seems too difficult to follow without high level of concentration.

As second language learners, our students want to be able to understand what people say to them in specific language, English. If they do not understand of what is being said, the students may fail in listening and not give any appropriate responds, as the result there will be no two ways of

communication, and the objective of communication may not be achieved. In communication by using second language, the second language learners need some efforts in understanding/ catching the meaning of the words they have recently heard; they have to think first before they could grasp the meaning of the words, especially if they are not in the level of the language.

Listening skill of second language is not derived naturally; it needs some processes of learning. The processes of listening in the classroom involve a teacher and students. In the classroom the students are given some lists of exercises from a number of materials. A lot of listening materials are derived from recorded extract, for instance on CD, tape record, video and others. Probably the main source of listening for students is the voice of their teacher. Individual voice of the teacher can also be called as the source of listening, because in teaching learning process, teacher talk as he is giving some instructions should also be understood by their students. But in fact the students need variety in listening then just listen to the teacher's voice.

Richards (2008: 3-15) considers listening in two different perspectives; listening as comprehension and listening as acquisition. Listening as comprehension is the traditional way of thinking about the nature of listening. Indeed, in most methodology manuals *listening* and *listening comprehension* are synonymous. This view of listening is based on the assumption that the main function of listening in second language learning is to facilitate understanding of spoken discourse. On the other hand listening as acquisition concerns on how listening facilitates the second language acquisition. This listening activity involves the students to a real listening situation like doing role play, while listening as comprehension focus on the messages of language. Most of listening activities in the classroom are merely listening as comprehension.

Instead of doing listening activity in the classroom, the students should also practice their listening skill outside the classroom. This kind of activity can be more challenging and fun. They can find any other materials everywhere, often on CDs, on MP3 players, videos or on the internet. Those

materials provide some texts which enable the students to learn without any intervention from their teacher. Their do such kind of activity and practice their listening unconsciously. Probably the easy way of practicing listening is by listening to songs. Many of the students enjoy songs very much. They will be curious on understanding the lyric as it may reflect his or her feeling. Another way is by watching English movie, as they see the set on the screen and listening to the dialogue. Although they may not understand the whole dialogue, at least they will know some parts and they will absorb the language gradually.

Harmer suggests some listening principles (2007:135-136), 'Firstly a teacher should encourage his students to listen as often and as much as possible. Beside listening activity in the classroom, students should also practice away from the classroom through internets, TVs, CDs, tapes, radio and so on. Secondly, teacher should also help the students to prepare themselves for listening. It means they will need to look at pictures, discussed the topic, or read the questions first. Thirdly, when the teacher play the track

only once probably there will be no spare time for them to pick up some important information, then they will ask for second chance. Fourthly, teacher should draw out the meaning of what is being said, what is intended and find out what impression it makes on the students. Fifth, a teacher should also consider about the stage of the students, they have to be classified in their own level of listening, because different listening stages deserve different listening task. The last part, the teacher asks the students to use time and emotional energy in a listening text – than it makes sense to them to experience in many different applications of listening.'

Richards (2008: 4-10) introduces two kinds of processes in listening, they are Top-down and bottom up processing. Top down processing refers to the use of background knowledge in understanding the meaning of a message. Whereas bottom up processing starts from language to meaning, top-down processing goes from meaning to language. The background knowledge required for top-down processing may be previous knowledge about the topic, situational or contextual knowledge,

or knowledge in the form of "schemata" or "scripts" plans about the overall structure of events and the relationships between them.

Bottom-up process stems from linguistic knowledge. This process identifies the meaning from linguistic elements in an order from the smallest linguistic unit like phonemes, words, sentences to the largest one like complete texts. It is the process where learners rely on the sounds, words and grammar in the message in order to create meaning. The listening activity involves exercises such as dictation, cloze listening, and the use of multiple choice questions after a text, and similar activities that require close and detailed recognition.

Top-down interpretation, on the other hand, requires the students to go to the listening with their prior knowledge of topic, context, and type of text as well as knowledge of language to reconstruct the meaning using clues. This background knowledge activates a set of expectations that help the listener to interpret what is heard and anticipate what will come next. The listening activities may come out with prediction. It starts from giving the students some clues such as some key words, pictures or even

silent videos. The next step, students should be given some chances to predict the topic, situation or what going to be next.

There are two types of listening activities extensive listening and intensive listening. Extensive listening refers to some listening activities which is done out of the classroom. Extensive listening usually derived from authentic materials like radio broadcast, movie, songs, TV news and soon. Oppositely intensive listening happens in the classroom when the teacher brings the listening audio material on tape or CD with the listening handbook.

Harmer suggests (2007b: 203) that though combination of extensive and intensive listening material will provide a perfect opportunity for the students to hear more English. Teaching listening is usually dominated by intensive listening where the students practice their listening mostly in the classroom with some audio materials which are prepared by their teachers. It makes the students depended on the activities range in the classroom only with limitation of time. In fact there are many sources of listening out there like film/movie that may can enrich and vary the students' experience and at

the same time they have more time to practice. To introduce some extensive listening materials into classroom will encourage them to do the same at home to practice their listening.

## MOVIE

In Free on Line Dictionary (<http://www.thefreedictionary/movie.com>), it is mentioned that movie is a sequence of photographs projected onto a screen with sufficient rapidity as to create the illusion of motion and continuity. A movie is also defined as a connected cinematic narrative represented in this form. Its purpose is to entertain its audiences because it enacts the story by sound and a sequence of images giving the illusion of continuous movement or visual effect.

Students are often watching movie/film at home from television, internet, or CDs. They will easily find a film they like in videos or CDs rental and bring them home. The students usually enjoy the movie without regarding that they can practice their listening and not only trapped by the story of the movie. Harmer (2007a: 144) has warned about the danger of videos. The students may treat them rather

as they treat watching television, uncritically and lazily, on the other hand teachers want them to engage; not only the content of what they are seeing but also other language features. It means that the teacher should be creative in creating some exercises related to the video/film, so the process of listening activity will give more benefits to the students' proficiencies.

However, videos have been sources of authentic language and selected as the means of teaching and learning ESL. Liou, Katchen, and Wang (Eds.) (2003), also explain that;

'Video, and in particular films, offers some advantages for enhancing listening skills. Although films are scripted, they are made to sound natural to the native speaker and thus they do represent authentic language. Too much teaching material is presented in artificially slow and clear language, but at some point students need to be able to deal with language as it is naturally spoken. Since they do not live in an ESL context, films to some extent substitute for the input of students they cannot get from outside the classroom.'

Harmer (2007b: 308) also supports that to encourage the

students to watch while they are listening will give them a chance to 'the language in use'. This will allow them to see intonation matches facial expression and what gestures to accompany certain utterances. Unspoken social behavior and situation are easier to see on film than to describe in a book. However teachers need to be aware that students often see film/movie at home with full relaxation. Teacher have to provide them with good viewing and listening task so they will give full attention to what they are hearing and seeing.

Liou, Katchen, and Wang (Eds.) (2003), say A DVD or Digital Versatile Disc or Digital Video Disc can store more information than the traditional HVS format. Moreover DVD provides sound and pictures which are a lot more qualified. It also gives more information about subtitles/captions in several languages, sometimes two or more extra sound tracks, and added video material, such as interviews with the actors. For language learners the added subtitles are of even greater interest because they allow the learner to read in English what the actors are saying and also to read in the L1 (first language). Teachers

can also make use of the added interviews or other material.

### THE AUTHENTIC MATERIAL AS MEDIA OF TEACHING

The definition of authentic materials used in this paper is taken from Peacock (1997) as quoted by Martinez: materials that have been produced to fulfill some social purpose in the language community (<http://www3.telus.net/linguisticsissues/authenticmaterials.html>).

Widdowson (1990) defines *Authentic* as a material designed for native speakers of English used in the classroom in a way similar to the one it was designed for. For example, a radio news report brought into the class so students discuss the report on pollution in the city where learners live.

Like any other materials bringing the authentic material into classroom has advantages and disadvantages. Martinez writes about the advantages and disadvantages of authentic material. The advantages of using authentic material are students are exposed to real discourse, as in videos of interviews with famous people where intermediate students listen for gist. Authentic materials keep students informed about what is

happening in the world, so they have an intrinsic educational value. As teachers, we are educators working within the school system, so education and general development are part of our responsibilities (Sanderson, 1999). Textbooks often do not include incidental or improper English. They can produce a sense of achievement, e.g., a brochure on England given to students to plan a 4-day visit. The same piece of material can be used under different circumstances if the task is different. Language change is reflected in the materials so that students and teachers can keep abreast of such changes. (<http://www3.telus.net/linguisticsissues/authenticmaterials.html>).

Beside of those benefits, Martinez also mentions that authentic material has some disadvantages. The material may be too culturally biased, so unnecessarily difficult to understand outside the language community. The vocabulary might not be relevant to the student's immediate needs. Too many structures are mixed so lower levels have a hard time decoding the texts. Special preparation is necessary which can be time consuming. With listening, there might be too many different

accents. The material can become outdated easily, e.g. news. (<http://www3.telus.net/linguisticsissues/authenticmaterials.html>).

To avoid the disadvantages of using authentic material as learning resources, teacher should be able to choose the appropriate material to adjust to the students' level. Probably, the richest source of gathering authentic material is by downloading from the internet. From the internet we can get many materials in video, audio or in written form.

The process of listening for English as foreign language students (EFL) probably start from their classroom. It is because the language they used in daily life is not English. In the listening classroom, the EFL students will get a chance to listen to English use like in conversations, short functional texts, or even monologues. The target of a listening activity is basically to make the students to get used to the English sound, words, phrases, sentences, paragraphs, and they are also expected to be able to comprehend what lies behind those linguistics aspects such as, the strands of meaning of utterances, context and so on.

In listening class the students are being trained to improve their

listening ability, so they will be able to apply their ability in real world communication. In this case, to bring them some authentic materials in to the classroom will give them challenging opportunity and to introduce them to the real world listening. Berardo says that authentic materials give the students experience to the use of language in the real contexts. Other benefit from bringing the authentic material into classroom is that when using the materials the students are highly motivated, moreover the material give them a sense of achieving when the students understand the meanings. (2006: 60)

Berardo adds that other benefit of using authentic material is like bringing the classroom outside. The students will learn about language used in the environment, not the language used in the purpose of learning material. The students will experience the real language and how the language is used. Here the role of the teacher is not deluded the language learner but to prepare them, giving the awareness and necessary skills so as to understand how the language is actually used. (2006: 60)

Bringing movies into the listening classroom will give the students many beneficial

experiences that might be not derived from their listening text books. Their text books may provide many audio materials which are provided by native speakers, but this might be not enough to prepare them to a real world listening. This is because the book only concerns to the language sound but provide fewer clues on how the interaction in social life occurs. Meanwhile movies do not only provide the sound or audio but it also provides the real situation where the interaction is taking place and how people interact including the body language and expression.

Although movies are scripted but the language, intonation and the expression presented by the characters are made as natural as possible. Therefore the students, especially EFL students will be able to learn how language is used in the interaction; how intonation differentiate the speakers' intention, how some gestures are used to indicate something, and how people sometimes not directly say what their meant explicitly.

Teachers should also carefully select the movies and caption used in EFL classroom. The language in the movies should be suitable for the students' level; some movies might be too difficult or too easy for

certain level. It is because authentic materials are not design to be used for academic purposes. The chosen caption should provide appropriate situation which support the listening process; it should represent real interactions (transactional or interpersonal).

Teachers also need to design the suitable task for each movie, so the students will have appropriate activities related to the listening activities. Without providing the right listening task for them, the students will be trapped watching the movie just for enjoyment and neglect the learning activities.

The reason why teachers should present the movies in short duration is that the capacity of the students' memory in storing information might be limited, so it is necessary to provide them with some listening activities and task with a certain period of time to avoid missing information. Not all of the captions in movies are appropriate for practicing listening, therefore selecting and editing the caption to be presented to the students will help the teacher in providing good listening material in improving the students' listening proficiencies.

## CONCLUSION

Movies produce authentic language, the situation which is presented in the form of video gives more beneficial to the students. On the video they can see the characters' body movements or gestures following the utterance spoken by them. Thus the students will get some experience how some people interact in certain situation. It is because practicing listening is not only understanding the meaning of the words by words but it is also about understanding speakers meaning, explicitly or implicitly and this can only be reached if the students understand the context of situation. However teachers should carefully select the movies they will use in the classroom. The language in the movies should be suitable for the students' level; some movies might be too difficult or too easy for certain level. It is because authentic materials are not design to be used for academic purposes.

Teachers also need to design the suitable task for each movie, so the students will have appropriate activities related to improve their listening proficiencies.

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