



IMPACT OF AUTHENTIC MATERIALS ON THE LISTENING COMPREHENSION PERFORMANCE OF SENIOR SECONDARY STUDENTS IN NORTH- WEST ZONE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

The study investigated the impact of authentic materials on the listening comprehension of senior secondary students in North- West Zone, Nigeria. The design of this study was a pre-test post-test of quasi experimental. The population for the study consisted of all the senior secondary schools students in North- west zone, Nigeria. Purposive sampling technique was used to select SSII students who served as the sample for the study. The samples were in two intact classes, one for the experimental group and the other control group. The instrument used in collecting data was listening comprehension test. The data collected were analyzed using mean and standard deviations to answer the research questions raised while independent samples t-test was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. Findings of the study revealed that authentic materials had significant impact on the experimental group students' listening comprehension performance at identifying specific information. The result of the study further revealed no significant impact of authentic materials on making inference, however the experimental group students' mean score was higher compared to students in the control group. Based on the findings, it was recommended that teachers utilize authentic materials to exposure students to use of English language in real life context in order to stimulate active involvement in the listening class and improve students listening comprehension.

Key words: authentic materials, listening comprehension, interactive processing, performance

Introduction

Listening is a critical skill in language acquisition, language learning, communication and education. Listening consumes more of our daily communication time than other forms of communication. It is the key to all meaningful communication in all aspects of life; for better social relationships, educational and career development. Hence, one needs to make a conscious effort not to just hear what people say but to comprehend and respond appropriately. Many successful people are good listeners who can comprehend spoken language accurately in a communicative or learning process. Ranukadevi (2014) stated that listening is an important factor in obtaining aural input. In order to comprehend speech efficiently, people are required to listen attentively, process the information and respond to it. Polat and Eristi (2019) asserted that listening is one of the most useful skills by which people acquire language through listening to the interactional conversations.

Children acquire their mother tongue or first language through listening to language input from parents and care-givers. They get to comprehend the language by listening and interacting with their environment. Language learners need to understand spoken language first before attempting to speak, read or write, making listening an indispensable tool in language learning. Learning cannot occur without any oral input; teachers impart knowledge using language in spoken form while students must listen and express their understanding of knowledge gained in spoken or written form. It is noted that listening has a greater percentage in learning and oral communication; over 50 percent of time learners spend in learning a foreign language is devoted to listening (Huy 2015 in Nicholas & Bello (2022); Renukadevi (2014). Students spend more time listening to classroom instructions, engage in learning activities and receive feedback. Through listening, students learn how to communicate their ideas, ask questions and respond to their teachers correctly. Listening facilitates not only language learning but also other school subjects without which teaching/learning will be meaningless. And ultimately, it is a predictor of learners' academic success as well as career

prospects.

Similar to first language acquisition, second or foreign language learning is achieved mostly through continual exposure to the target language. Listening is the most significant skill in learning, comprehending and giving meaningful responses to spoken language. Second or foreign language learners of English language need to get constant exposure to the target language within and outside the classroom in order to comprehend and practice it. The subjects of this study are second language learners of English language who are not immersed in the community of the native speakers. It is therefore crucial that they are taught listening using authentic materials (AM) that provide much exposure to the language in order to enhance their abilities to listen, relate and understand the language.

Authentic materials are genuine samples of English language that exposes students to how English language is spoken in different situations. Gilmore (2007) defined AM as stretches of real language used for real communication, produced by a real speaker or writer for a real audience and designed to convey a real message. They are as spoken and written language materials used in daily situations by speakers of the language (Ali & Celik, 2019). The materials were not originally created for language teaching and learning but can be adapted to teach listening because they exemplify use of the language in various life contexts.

Employing authentic materials in teaching listening comprehension can result in learning experiences that are more inspiring, imaginative and engaging for students. They help learners get a meaningful connection with the language and of great value to elicit genuine responses from them in listening lessons. Examples of authentic materials for teaching listening comprehension are pictures, songs, news clips, TV programs/ advertisements, radio broadcast, conversations, documentaries, dialogues, short stories clips, podcasts, quiz shows, cartoons, movies, soap operas, online materials etc. It is imperative that authentic materials be used to expose learners to the language in real life contexts. An interesting fact about AM can be accessed and delivered via technologies like radio, television, YouTube videos, internet etc. These technologies often

entertain, fascinate and capture students' attention on a daily basis. By using AM, teachers can implement various techniques and design interactive activities to improve students' listening comprehension. The focus of this study was on AM such as pictures, news, conversations, songs, short stories clip that expose students' to use of the language.

Students should be prepared to better comprehend oral language by activating their prior knowledge. This is because one's prior knowledge and experiences of the world influence how a spoken language is processed for good comprehension. Prior knowledge includes the knowledge of the listening topic, familiarity with the content, knowledge of the listening context, the text-type, the culture depicted in the material held in long-term memory. Students who have ideas about a topic from their prior knowledge and experience could find it easier to understand related topic thereby achieve more in listening comprehension. Teaching and learning listening comprehension necessitate that learners are exposed to strategies that can activate crucial pre-existing schemata (Richards, 2022). Authentic materials are contextual, depicts real language and can be used to trigger learners' prior knowledge at the pre-listening stage. An oral text does not carry complete meaning by itself rather it provides directions for constructing meaning from previously acquired knowledge. When students link a listening text to their prior knowledge and experience, their comprehension increases (Abdullah, Rizky & Ferry, 2017). To aid students' comprehension of spoken language, students should be guided to process a text using the interactive (bottom-up and top-down) processing. More so a language is not learnt in isolation, rather in connection to a situation, or background of persons and events which influence making sense of spoken language.

Listening is an active process because it involves making sense of a speaker's utterance eg. accent, pronunciation, grammar and vocabulary Dewi (2018). Listening actively is critical to students' success in school and career. Students need practice in listening skills such as: listening for gist, identifying specific information, making inference, making prediction etc. Possessing effective listening skills correspond to the ability

to comprehend a language and communicate in it meaningfully. The rich content of AM can be exploited to provide ample practice through listening activities. This will encourage learners' active participation in interactive activities to improve their listening skills. Listening activities should be learner-centered in order to involve learners in various forms of interactions on the content of AM. This will kindle learners' confidence and overall learning experience.

The Problem

In spite of the significance of listening comprehension in language learning and education, the teaching of listening comprehension has been neglected and poorly taught. Hamouda (2013) states that EFL learners have serious problems in English listening comprehension due to the fact that more attention is paid to English grammar than the teaching of listening comprehension. It is observed that many secondary schools do not have allotted time on the timetable for listening comprehension. Inadequate practice in listening comprehension lessons result in students' poor performance. Nicholas, Lawal and Bello (2022) opined that people may assume that the listening skill is being developed automatically during teaching/learning process hence priority is given more to other language skills. The students from the area of study are learning English as a second language and are not immersed in the language community. Thus, they should be exposed to authentic materials that depict how the language is used in real life.

Classroom experience has shown that methods employed in teaching listening comprehension in schools are not effective enough. The conventional method is used in teaching listening comprehension in the area of study. In listening comprehension lessons, the teacher reads a text and occasionally plays an audio tape to the students. Students are only required to listen to the teacher or audio tape and answer some questions at the end. This method can be regarded as just testing and not teaching listening comprehension. There are problems with this form of teaching and learning listening which do not meet the needs and peculiarity of students. In such situations, students would find it

difficult to remember text contents and comprehend the material. Also, students may get frustrated, easily turned off and could become apprehensive during listening lessons.

Teachers do not employ suitable materials in teaching listening comprehension. (Ibrahim, 2019) observed that lack of instructional materials can hinder the successful implementation of any curriculum. The materials used in teaching listening comprehension do not motivate students to develop their listening comprehension. Active listening strategy is not employed in teaching listening comprehension. A listening passage does not contain complete meaning by itself, it has to be linked to learners' prior knowledge for adequate comprehension. This is why it is essential that students are taught to use the interactive listening strategy where they use both prior knowledge and linguistic knowledge in understanding oral text. Lack of appropriate learning materials affects students' performance in English language (Onileowo in Alabere, 2017); thus, selection of suitable teaching and learning material should be given priority.

To solve the problems associated with poor listening comprehension relevant materials are needed. As observed by Azizah (2016), AM have proved to be effective in developing learners' listening skills. There is the likelihood that if AM are used in designing interactive learning activities in listening comprehension, a better performance in listening comprehension by senior secondary (SS) students could be achieved. For this reason, the researchers examined the effects of AM on SS two students listening comprehension performance.

Literature Review

Authentic materials (AM) are sources of comprehensible language which exemplify use of the language in real life context for second language learners. Al-Musallam (2009) use the term authentic materials to refer to language models that reflect naturalness of form, and appropriateness of cultural and situational context for the speakers/ listeners of the language. Authentic materials refer to the use of texts, photographs, video selections, and other teaching resources that were not specially prepared for

pedagogical purposes in teaching (Parmawati, 2017). Thomas (2014) maintained that AM are produced to communicate information and meaning rather than for teaching language. Apsari (2014) describes authentic material as those taken from real life sources e.g. newspapers, magazines, songs, literature, and the internet which are channels of giving students adequate exposure to real language (Azizah 2016; Widyastuti, 2017).

Authentic materials are not far-fetched. They can be accessed from magazines, conversation, newspapers, news broadcast, Tv and radio programs, You Tube videos and internet. The materials are rich in context, and provide opportunities for students to see, hear and experience the language as in real life situation. They create a lively educational atmosphere (Belaid, 2015) thus help learners feel closer to the target language because they use the items that exist in real world, in their classroom (Widya, 2017). Today, a great number of people including students spend most of their time interacting with others, listening to news and songs, watching films, documentary, getting information etc. online without any formal instruction. Since students are fascinated with such materials; they could be effective in providing interesting listening activities to enhance their listening comprehension.

El-Marsafy, Abd El-Rahman, Awad and Harb (2018) stated that authentic materials are beneficial because they provide a refreshing change from the language textbook; focus more closely on learners' interests, needs, motivation and connect the classroom with the outside world. Authentic materials help students eliminate the feeling of failing or other negative association they may have toward learning activity (Widyastuti, 2017). Teaching students using AM will enable them participate in genuine interaction both inside or outside the classroom (Arianie, 2017; Meena, 2020) and make learning process more motivating, engaging, imaginative for learners. Zazulak (2017). Al-Azri & Al-Rashidi (2014); Mugimu and Sekiziyivu (2016) and Ryan (2014) opined that an authentic material enables students to be in charge of language learning environment. AM enable students to master the target language more effectively in

both second and foreign language contexts (Sari, 2016). When authentic materials are made available for students, they provide exact examples of how the language is used in different context such conversation, interview, classroom dialogue, shopping etc. (Hartatik & Rahmah, 2016).

Listening involves giving attention and focus to both verbal and non-verbal messages to construct meaning. (Kirana, 2016) opined that listening goes beyond hearing to added dimensions of understanding, paying overt attention, analyzing, and evaluating the spoken messages, and acting upon what is heard. Listening is an active, purposeful process of making sense of what we hear Nordquist (2019). Bingöl, Celik, Yidliz, and Tugrul Mart (2014) defined listening comprehension as one's ability to recognize another person through aural organ and assign meaning to the message to understand it. Listening comprehension is the ability to comprehend oral language at the discourse level: stories, conversations and informational texts through processes of extracting and constructing meaning (Kim & Pilcher, 2016).

Human beings cannot do without communication, they often engage in different forms of communication (conversation, dialogue, seminar, interaction, interview, teaching and learning etc.) daily. However, without active listening people cannot successfully engage, understand and respond correctly in a communication process. Listening is a pivotal skills in learning English because by listening learners acquire basic language to interact in spoken communication and enable them to speak Rahman & Suryati (2018). Hassan and Hassan 2018 in Polat and Erişti (2019) maintained that teaching materials used for foreign language teaching-learning process should influence the entire teaching process, learning outcomes, the teaching methods and techniques.

Arafat (2020) investigated the effectiveness of using authentic materials on the listening comprehension ability of Saudi EFL university students. The study design was quasi experimental consisting of forty-four students, twenty-two students in the experimental and control group. The experimental group was taught with authentic materials and the control group

with non-authentic materials. The instruments for data collection were listening comprehension tests taken from BBC and VOA radio. The results of study revealed that the experimental group performed significantly better than the control group.

Dewi (2018) investigated the influence of authentic materials (songs) on EFL students' listening comprehension. The participants of the study were the second-year students of junior high school in Indonesia. The instrument used in collecting data was listening comprehension test consisting of 20 items multiple choice test designed from songs. Findings revealed that using authentic materials had influence on EG achievement in listening comprehension.

Yasser's (2014) research was conducted to find out the impact of AM on students' listening comprehension for inferred meaning at the second-year students' of SMP Negeri 4, Makassar. It was an experimental study consisting of one group pre-test – post-test. The participants were thirty in an intact class viii. Purposive sampling was used to select the population of the study. The research instrument consisted of 10 items involving fill in the blank listening tests. The listening test was structured from two songs, one at pre-test and the other at post-test. The study finding showed that AM improved the students' listening comprehension in inferred meaning comprehension.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study are to:

- i. determine the impact of authentic materials in identifying specific information in listening comprehension performance of senior secondary students in North – West zone of Nigeria.
- ii. examine the impact of authentic materials on making inference in listening comprehension performance of senior secondary students in North – West zone of Nigeria.

Research Questions

The research questions formulated for the purpose of this study were:

- i. What is the mean difference in identifying specific information in listening

comprehension performance of senior secondary students taught using authentic materials and those taught in the conventional method?

- ii. What is the mean difference in making inference in listening comprehension performance of senior secondary students taught using authentic materials and those taught in the conventional method?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were stated and tested at $p=0.5$ level of significance.

- i. There is no significant mean difference in identifying specific information in listening comprehension performance of senior secondary students taught using authentic materials and those taught in the conventional method.
- ii. There is no significant mean difference in making inference in listening comprehension performance of senior secondary students taught using authentic materials and those taught in the conventional method.

Method

The study employed a pre-test post-test quasi experimental design with a control group. The population of the study consisted of 292,615 senior secondary two students' studying in public senior secondary schools in North - West zone of Nigeria (Source: National Bureau of Statistics, 2019). The sample consisted of two intact classes purposively sampled from two senior secondary schools in Kano and Katsina states. Purposive sampling technique was used to select the sample for the study. The samples were in two intact classes, one for the experimental group and the

other control group. The study lasted for eight weeks; the experimental group was exposed to class teaching (treatment) with six lesson plans developed by the researchers while the control group was taught in the conventional way. The experimental group were taught with authentic materials (picture, song, news broadcast, short story clip, conversation and dialogue) while the control group were taught without AM in the conventional method. The instrument for data collection was listening comprehension test. The instrument was subjected to face and content validity. The reliability analysis using Person Product Moment Correlation Coefficient was 0.76. A pre-test was administered to the experimental and control group using listening comprehension test to determine students' entry level in listening comprehension. At the end of the treatment phase, a post test was administered to both groups using listening comprehension test to access if there was impact due to the treatment. The listening comprehension test consisted of six multiple choice questions designed by the researchers. From the six questions, three tested specific information and three making inference. Each question earned three marks making a total eighteen marks. The research questions were answered using mean and standard deviation. The hypothesis was tested with independent samples t-test at a significance of 0.05 level of significance to determine whether there was a significant effect of AM on the students' listening comprehension performance.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

The research questions were answered using mean and standard deviation while the null hypotheses were analyzed using independent samples t-test tested at

Research Question One

What is the mean difference in identifying specific information in listening comprehension performance of senior secondary students taught using authentic materials and those taught in the conventional method? This research question is answered using means, standard deviations and 95% confidence interval of the difference. The result is presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Means and Standard Deviations on identifying specific information in listening comprehension performance

Group	N	Mean	SD	Std. Error Mean	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
							Lower	Upper
Control	31	4.35	2.303	.414				
Experimental	31	6.97	1.798	.323	-2.613	.525	-3.663	-1.563
Total	62							

Table 1: presents the Means and Standard Deviations on identifying specific information in listening comprehension performance of the students that participated in this study. The mean performance score of the control group was (M=4.35, SD=2.303) and that of the experimental group was (M=6.97, SD=1.798). The mean difference was -2.613 and the 95% confidence

interval of the difference was between -3.663 and -1.563. This shows that there was a difference between identifying specific information in listening comprehension performance scores of students taught using authentic materials and those that were taught using conventional method.

Research Question Two

What is the mean difference in making inference in listening comprehension performance of senior secondary students taught using authentic materials and those taught in the conventional method? This research question is answered using means, standard deviations and 95% confidence interval of the difference. The result is presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Means and Standard Deviations on making inference in listening comprehension performance

Group	N	Mean	SD	Std. Error Mean	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
							Lower	Upper
Control	31	3.48	2.204	.396				
Experimental	31	3.97	2.373	.426	-.484	.582	-1.647	.680
Total	62							

Table 2: presents the Means and Standard Deviations on making inference in listening comprehension performance of the students that participated in this study. The mean performance score of the control group was (M=3.48, SD=2.204) and that of the experimental group was (M=3.97, SD=2.373). The mean difference

was -0.484 and the 95% confidence interval of the difference was between -1.647 and 0.680. This shows that there was a little difference between in making inference in listening comprehension performance scores of students taught using authentic materials and those that were taught using conventional method.

Null Hypothesis One

There is no significant mean difference in identifying specific information in listening comprehension performance of senior secondary students taught using authentic materials and those taught in the conventional method.

This null hypothesis was analysed using independent samples t-test tested at $\alpha = 0.05$ level of

significance. The result of the analysis is presented in Table 3

Table 3: Summary of independent samples t-test on identifying specific information in listening comprehension performance

Group	N	Mean	SD	T	Df	P	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Control	31	4.35	2.303							
Experimental	31	6.97	1.798	-4.980	60	.000	-2.613	.525	-3.663	-1.563
Total	62									

Table 3 presents the summary of independent samples t-test on identifying specific information in listening comprehension performance of the students that participated in this study. The result shows that $t(60) = -4.980, p = 0.000$; the null hypothesis which stated no significant difference

was rejected. Therefore, there was a significant difference on the impact of authentic materials on identifying specific information in listening comprehension performance of senior secondary students taught using authentic materials and those taught using conventional method.

Null Hypothesis Two

There is no significant mean difference in making inference in listening comprehension performance of senior secondary students taught using authentic materials and those taught in the conventional method. This null hypothesis was analysed using independent samples t-test tested at $\alpha = 0.05$ level of significance. The result of the analysis is presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Summary of independent samples t-test on making inference in listening comprehension performance

Group	N	Mean	SD	T	df	P	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Control	31	3.48	2.204							
Experimental	31	3.97	2.373	-.832	60	.409	-.484	.582	-1.647	.680
Total	62									

Table 4: presents the summary of independent samples t-test on making inference in listening comprehension performance of the students that participated in this study. The result showed that $t(60) = -0.823, p = 0.409$; the null hypothesis which stated no significant difference was retained. Therefore, there was no significant difference on the impact of authentic materials on making inference in listening comprehension performance of senior secondary students taught

using authentic materials and those taught using conventional method.

Discussion of Findings

This study examined the impact authentic materials on senior secondary school students listening performance in North-West Zone, Nigeria. The findings revealed that authentic materials had a significant impact on identifying specific information on the experimental group

listening comprehension performance. Table 1 presents the summary of independent samples t-test on identifying specific information in listening comprehension performance of the students that participated in this study. The result shows that $t(60) = -4.980, p = 0.000$; the null hypothesis which stated no significant mean difference was rejected. Although there was no significant impact of AM on making inference, the EG gained more in mean compared to the control group. The mean performance score of the control group was ($M=3.48, SD=2.204$) and that of the experimental group was ($M=3.97, SD=2.373$). The findings of this study support the findings of past studies by Arafat (2020), Dewi (2018), Polat and Erişti (2019), and Kirana (2016) who reported effectiveness of AM in developing students listening comprehension. The study contrasts with Yasser's (2014) study that found significant effect of AM on the subjects making inference.

The results of the study can be attributed to the fact that experimental group (EG) benefited from exposure to samples of the real language. This enhanced their learning experience as the AM employed were media that fascinated the EG and related to their interests. AM used triggered the interest, imagination of the EG and set their minds thinking. The contextual clues such as speakers' voice tone, body language, gestures, facial expressions of the authentic materials aided in construction of meaning. Also, interactive (bottom-up and top-down) processing utilized by students in processing the listening text heightened their achievements. It helped to activate and connect the students' previous knowledge on the topic with the linguistic knowledge.

The finding agreed with Arafat (2020); Dewi (2018) and Yasser (2014) who declared that authentic materials increase students' motivation and interest in English classes. It agrees with Belaid's (2015) claim that authentic materials create a lively educational atmosphere for developing listening comprehension and other language skills and leads to a more practical learning outcome. The finding likewise supports Azizah's (2016) claim that AM helped the EG to focus on content and meaning rather than on the structure of the language itself. Authentic

materials and strategy utilized in this study aid EG to make sense of what they hear.

Conclusion

The study results established the fact that authentic materials had significant impact on senior secondary students' listening comprehension achievement. This indicated the significance of authentic materials in improving listening comprehension and cannot be underestimated. Authentic materials exposed students to use of the language in real context, providing inspiring learning environment. Exposure to real language context enhanced the students' active involvement in listening activities and interactions at the three stages of listening comprehension. Therefore, the study concluded that authentic materials be implemented in secondary schools in Nigeria to teach listening comprehension by utilizing the abundant free varieties of authentic materials available in radio/ Tv programs and the internet.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Teachers should use authentic materials to expose students to the use of English in real life situation. Students listening comprehension cannot be significantly improved by just exposing them to AM. The materials should be used in designing suitable listening activities that demonstrate real life purposes for which the language is used. This will help students to comprehend speech, express their ideas, think critically and analyze the ideas.
2. Students should be given assignment from different sources of AM such as BBC, VOA, Tv/ radio programs and the internet to practice listening by themselves outside the classroom. This will not only advance students listening comprehension but also boost their self-confidence and autonomy to practice listening outside the classroom.
3. Government and educational stakeholders should provide schools with language resource room well equipped with a variety of AM as well as facilities and equipment such as projectors, laptops, computers, tape

recorder, video machine and learning media like, radio, Tv and internet through which teachers and students can access a variety of AM to promote listening comprehension and other language skills.

4. It was recommended that curriculum planners readdress the issue of teaching listening comprehension in public schools. They should recommend that language teachers utilize authentic materials and provide the criteria for selecting the materials in teaching listening comprehension process.
5. English textbook writers should support teachers to be more creative and involve students' active participation in listening comprehension process. They should write on different types of authentic materials and provide different suitable learning activities that can stimulate and advance students listening comprehension.

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