

The Use Of Authentic Videos When Learning Foreign Language Listening Skills

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Abstract

Background:

Authentic videos are materials created for entertainment, in which language is used naturally, without pedagogical purposes. Recently, they have been used to support auditory learning, since the academic audios used for this purpose have a standardized structure (Gómez, 2007). A review of the literature shows that in the last ten years there has been an increase in studies related to the influence of videos on English language learning. Authentic videos, understood as materials created for entertainment rather than educational purposes, have gained relevance as a resource for strengthening listening comprehension in language learning. Their value lies in natural exposure to the language, which contrasts with the academic audio recordings traditionally used, which have a controlled and artificial structure. Recent literature suggests that these videos allow for deeper immersion in the target language by incorporating real speech characteristics such as natural speed, accent, slang, and paralinguistic elements.

Methodology: This article expands on the analysis of an experimental study conducted with 30 intermediate English learners, comparing the impact of an authentic video versus an academic audio recording.

Results: The results suggest that, although academic audio recordings generate better immediate performance, authentic videos promote learning that is closer to real language use and favor motivation, contextual understanding, and cultural exposure. Also, the results show that videos are a useful tool for supporting the development of listening skills in intermediate- level English learners. Additionally, the results suggest that more studies should be conducted to shed light on the impact on the acquisition of listening skills.

Keywords: authentic videos, academic audio recordings, experimental research

Date of Submission: 26-01-2026

Date of Acceptance: 06-02-2026

I. Introduction

The use of videos in the classroom for language teaching is a tool for planning English lessons that allows students to strengthen their listening skills, which has an impact on meaningful learning. It is also a tool for formative assessment. These two elements are the essence of the competency-based approach adopted in this study.

Authentic videos are materials designed for entertainment rather than educational purposes and are classified as authentic materials. This segment includes other resources such as texts, photographs, and comics used in teaching. Academic audio recordings are the most frequently tools used in the learning and assessment of language learners' listening skills. However, as with authentic videos, there are few studies that examine the effectiveness and relationship of these elements in the language teaching-learning process (Richards, 2001) and (Gómez, 2007).

A review of the literature shows that more evidence is still needed to reinforce the use of authentic videos as an effective teaching tool in listening comprehension learning. In the case of academic audio recordings, there are also few studies that critically analyze the favorable and unfavorable characteristics of their use in listening comprehension learning and assessment, and the influence they have on learning. Researchers point out that the use of audio recordings, as well as videos, is determined by the evolution of technology.

Therefore, with the data indicated above in this research project, 30 students enrolled in three different degree programs studying intermediate English at the Cozumel Academic Unit of the University of Quintana Roo participated to obtain evidence. They were divided into two experimental groups of 12 members each and a control group with six members. The teaching tools used were an authentic video and an academic audio clip

taken from the book *face2face*. In the first (authentic video), the students completed a ten-question questionnaire on the topic, and in the second (academic audio), they completed a ten-item test while listening to the audio. The results show how authentic videos are helpful for the acquisition of listening skills in intermediate-level students. The data also allow us to describe the role of academic audio recordings in the process of learning listening skills in a language, as well as the relationship with the results of the research by (Gómez, 2007) and (Ríos Garduño, 1991).

The development of listening skills is a crucial component in mastering a foreign language. Unlike other skills such as reading or writing, listening comprehension requires dealing with uncontrollable elements such as speech rate, intonation, accents, and cultural context. Traditionally, English language teaching programs have relied on structured academic audio recordings designed to facilitate comprehension through pauses, clear sound quality, and predictable dialogues.

However, technological advances and expanded access to multimedia content have made it possible to incorporate new resources such as authentic videos. Entertainment platforms, social media, and streaming services generate a huge volume of audiovisual material that reflects the real use of language in everyday contexts. This availability has spurred research into its pedagogical potential. Despite this, there is still a gap in the literature regarding the comparative effectiveness of authentic videos and academic audio recordings, especially for intermediate-level students. This paper contributes to that discussion by presenting experimental research that analyzes the impact of both materials on listening skill acquisition.

II. Literature Review

Authentic videos in the language teaching-learning process

The classification of videos has several lines, one of which is identified in the segment of authentic materials; this also includes readings, writings, and audios, among other instruments that can be used as teaching resources for teaching English, but their design is not pedagogical. In this sense, this research paper takes up Richards' (2001) proposal, which states that authentic materials refer to the use of texts, photographs, videos, and other resources in teaching that were not specially prepared for pedagogical purposes.

Although Richards (2001) does not specifically mention authentic videos, the definition can be interpreted to mean that authentic videos are those that are not designed for language teaching purposes. In this regard, the following paragraphs present a series of models that support the understanding of the usefulness of these materials in language teaching.

Mohamed Amin (2011) points out in his model that authentic videos induce satisfactory visualization for comprehension and acquisition of listening skills. This author has worked with video- based instruction, which, according to his procedure, consists of introducing videos into the classroom, including the four skills (listening, writing, reading, and speaking) through instruction (guided by someone) for one year, using a series of variables manipulated with a longitudinal experiment; the subjects of the study were intermediate-level French-speaking adolescents. The result was that authentic videos improve language learning.

In the literature review, in addition to the authentic materials model proposed by Elvis Wagner (2006, 2010) and Karina Collentine (1997), a series of works on videos and audiovisual materials in English language learning by Latin American researchers was also found, highlighting proposals on the subject of authentic videos from various theoretical perspectives, such as those of Gómez (2007), Villalobos (2010), Ríos Garduño (2009), Ramírez Ortiz (2007), and Villa, Ramírez, and Tapia (2008).

From a theoretical perspective on communication, Gómez's (2007) model, entitled *Satellite Television for Developing Lesson Plans in English Teaching*, points out that the use of audiovisual tools not only provides the skills to learn the language itself, but also cultural aspects. However, it should be noted that different factors must be considered in order to apply this type of material. In the case of Gómez's (2007) model, which uses audiovisual material with English subtitles, he states that these do not stress students and support learning.

Gómez (2007) bases his observations on research related to the use of videos by Savage and Howard (1992), Bello and Stempleski (1999), who agree that video is a combination of visuals and audio that stimulates with the added benefits of providing real language that contributes to cultural education. It has the advantage of being able to be stopped/paused, allowing students to see facial expressions and body language while listening to the pronunciation and accent of the language. In this same work, the researcher presents a series of criteria for selecting videos. These criteria are based on communication theory, and he points out seven points in this process: 1. Clarity of the message, 2. Speed of English, 3. Graphics, 4. Length of the sequence, 5. Independence of the sequence, 6. Skill, and 7. Quality of related material. Among the main conclusions he presents, related to the use of television, is that it provides visual information through images, sounds, words, and content reinforced by subtitles, which contributes to it being a pedagogically effective tool for developing students' listening skills, oral comprehension, and reading ability.

Based on the above, regarding the theoretical foundations of the use of authentic videos, various authors agree that authentic videos offer significant pedagogical advantages:

- Contextualization of language: they present real communicative situations involving cultural, social, and emotional elements.
- Multimodal input: they integrate images, gestures, facial expressions, intonation, and sound, facilitating overall comprehension of the message.
- Linguistic authenticity: they expose students to accents, dialectal variations, filler words, interruptions, and the real rhythm of speech.
- Increased motivation: students perceive the content as relevant, current, and engaging.

Lonergan (1984) and Tomalin (1986) emphasize that the value of video lies in combining language and social reality in a single resource, which promotes more meaningful learning. For his part, Wagner (2008, 2010) demonstrates that students respond differently in listening tests when the stimulus is a video compared to audio, due to the visual richness that complements comprehension.

However, although authentic videos provide realism, they also introduce challenges. Based on the literature reviewed, the main limitations are:

- They contain speech that is too fast or slang.
- Background noise that hinders comprehension.
- There is less pedagogical control over the content.

These characteristics, although challenging, are a natural part of real communication in a foreign language.

III. Materials And Methods

Experimental design

The study was conducted using a quasi-experimental design with three groups: two experimental groups and one control group, with a total of 30 participants. The implementation combined audiovisual presentation techniques with comprehension tests, following a quantitative and descriptive approach.

Study variables.

- Independent variable 1: use of authentic video.
- Independent variable 2: use of academic audio.
- Dependent variable: level of listening comprehension.
- Moderating variables: previous experience, motivation, extracurricular exposure to English, university degree.

Justification of sample size.

Although the sample size of 30 participants may be considered limited, it is consistent with pilot studies in second language acquisition, which seek to provide an initial approach to the phenomena under study.

Detailed description of the process.

Two methodological improvements suggested by the reviewed literature were incorporated into the research:

1. Double exposure to the video according to incremental input models.
2. Immediate application of the questionnaire to avoid interference with short-term memory.

Thus, the research presented here adopts a quantitative, descriptive experimental approach, as shown in Table 1. To achieve the objective of the study, which is to analyze whether authentic videos support the learning of English listening skills in intermediate-level students, a control group and two experimental groups were set up. The 30 participants were subjected to a treatment consisting of an authentic video accompanied by a ten-item instrument and an academic audio with a multiple-choice questionnaire, both lasting 5 minutes each.

Table 1. Methodological plan

Plan	Description
Type of research	Experimental (with two experimental groups and one control group).
Study subjects	Intermediate English students.
Data collection	Academic audio with a multiple-choice test and authentic video with a multiple-choice test.
Study area	University of Quintana Roo.
Sample size	30 subjects.
Sample type	Convenience.
Data analysis	Descriptive statistics

Source: Author's elaboration

Experimental process

The 30 participants were assigned to two experimental groups and one control group as follows: the first group consisted of 12 students studying for a degree in Business Systems. The second group consisted of 12 students studying for a degree in Tourism, and the third group consisted of 6 students studying for a degree in English Language, which was designated as the control group. The members of this group have a higher level of listening comprehension than the two experimental groups, or at least should have, given that they are constantly tested on their listening comprehension skills with other instruments, including academic audio recordings. This has made it possible to observe how authentic videos can influence the acquisition of this skill in comparison with traditional academic audio recordings.

Table 1 shows the composition of the three groups. The first column lists the six subjects who make up the control group, who are English language students. The second column lists the 12 subjects who make up experimental group 1, and the third column lists the subjects in experimental group 2.

Table 1. Composition of the experimental and control groups

Control group		Experimental group 1		Experimental group 2	
Type	Subject	Type	Subject	Type	Subject
Control	11	exp1	1	exp2	16
Control	14	exp1	2	exp2	17
Control	15	exp1	3	exp2	18
Control	24	exp1	4	exp2	19
Control	25	exp1	5	exp2	20
Control	28	exp1	6	exp2	21
		exp1	7	exp2	22
		exp1	8	exp2	23
		exp1	9	exp2	26
		exp1	10	exp2	27
		exp1	12	exp2	29
		exp1	13	exp2	30

Source: Authors' elaboration

For the experimental process, the 30 students underwent two tests. The process was divided into two phases, beginning with the authentic video and then the academic audio. First, the objective of the research was explained to them, and they were given a test sheet with 10 questions related to the topic of the authentic video, each with three possible answers, as shown in Table 2. To familiarize them with the questions, each student was given a sheet with the possible answers and five minutes to review them. Then, the five-minute authentic video was shown. Once the video was finished, the students were given three minutes to review it, and then the video was shown again. When the time was up, they were given five minutes to answer the test.

Once the five minutes were up, instructions were given about the academic audio. On this occasion, the instructions were given in English, since all the audio instruction is in English. They were immediately given the test for the academic audio, which consisted of a photocopied page from an English audio exercise book, with the title "Important Moments" in the upper right corner of the page containing an image with the caption "Sandy and Paula." At the bottom of the image were the instructions and test variables divided into two sections. The first section consisted of five questions with two answer options, which is completely different from the authentic video. The second section consisted of five questions with two answer options, as shown in Table 3.

Table 2. Instrument for the authentic video

Folio	Variables	1	2	3
1	Howard is worried because	A	b	C
2	So that he won't look foolish, Raj recommends him	A	b	C
3	Raj can't fish, but if Howard catches something, he can.	A	b	C
4	Howard describes fishing as	A	b	C
5	Penny tells Howard to	A	b	C
6	Howard wants	A	b	C
7	What does Leonard recommend him to do?	A	b	C
8	Penny doesn't want him to	A	b	C
9	Penny thinks he will catch some fish	A	b	C
10	To gut the fish, Howard has to	A	b	C

Source: Authors' elaboration

The measurement format chosen for the questionnaire consists of three allocation points or three possible response points, as shown in Table 2, where 1 is equivalent to possible response (a), 2 to (b), and 3 to response (c).

Table 3 shows the items in the academic audio test that the students answered. The questionnaire consists of ten questions with two answer options.

Table 3. Academic audio instrument

No.	Response variables
1	(Critics ¹ /Actors ²) such as Amis Jones loved it.
2	Well, Jones was (right ¹ /wrong ²) like he usually is.
3	I (don't like ¹ /don't mind ²) Amis Jones as a critic.
4	Even though it has (actors ¹ /directors ²) like Sy Harris and May Firth?
5	The whole thing was like a (wonderful ¹ /bad ²) dream.
6	There were just some black boxes which were used as tables and (chairs ¹ /beds ²).
7	It had such a good (cast ¹ /plot ²).
8	The plot was so (believable ¹ /far-fetched ²).
9	I've no idea why so many critics (liked ¹ /hated ²) it.
10	I can't understand why it's getting so much (attention ¹ /criticism ²).

Source: Authors' elaboration. Response options (response¹ response²)

Table 4 shows the 14 steps followed to develop the experiment, detailing the activities and the time taken, which has provided evidence of the usefulness of videos in teaching strategies for auditory learning.

Table 4. Experimental process

	Description	Estimated time
1	Randomly select groups.	1 day
2	Explain the process to participants.	5 minutes
3	Screening of the authentic video.	10 minutes
4	Indicate that the video has ended and give instructions.	5 minutes
5	Time for students to answer the 10 questions.	8 minutes
6	Indicate that the time to respond has expired.	3 minutes
7	Presentation of the academic audio.	10 minutes
8	Indicate that the academic audio has ended, give instructions, and distribute the instrument.	3 minutes
9	Students select the correct option.	8 minutes
10	Thank you for participating.	2 minutes
11	Division of groups by degree program. The first, Business Systems, is called experimental group 1, the second, Tourism, is called experimental group 2, and the third, English Language, is called the control group.	Not applicable
12	Statistical tests are performed on experimental group 1 and experimental group 2, using the responses from the authentic videos.	Not applicable
13	The control group undergoes statistical analysis using the results of the responses to the authentic videos.	Not applicable
14	The experimental group 1 and experimental group 2 undergo a statistical analysis with the results of the academic audio tests and are compared with the results of the control group.	Not applicable

Source: Authors' elaboration.

IV. Results And Discussion

Data analysis

In order to carry out the data analysis to determine whether the use of authentic videos improves students' listening skills, it was established that the numerical results of the experimental groups should be equal to or greater than the observations when compared to the control group. If the result was lower, it meant that the authentic videos did not support the improvement of their listening skills.

Analysis of the experimental groups.

The tests in the experimental process of group 1 were based on comparing the average value obtained by the control group with the academic audio (AAC=8.03) and the average value of the authentic video of the control group (AVC=6.5) with the average value of the authentic video of experimental group 1 (AVGE1=4.16) and the average value of the academic audio of experimental group 1 (AAEG1=5.61).

Table 1 Results of experimental group 1

Group experiment	Expected result	Result
AAC=8.03 > VAGE1=4.16	VAGE1 \geq AAC	Negative
VAC=6.5 > VAGE1=4.16	VAGE1 \geq VAC	Negative
AAC=8.03 > AAEG1=5.61	AAEG1 \geq AAC	Positive
VAC=6.5 > AAEG1=5.61	AAEG1 \geq VAC	Positive

Source: Authors' elaboration.

The contrast between the control group and experimental group 1 shows that the control group, composed of intermediate-level English language students, obtained an average score of 8.03, which is higher than the percentage obtained by experimental group 1 with the authentic video. This means that there is a difference of 3.87 percentage points in favor of academic audio recordings, which is contrary to what was expected, namely that the statistical result of the authentic video would be equal to or higher than that of the

academic audio recording. Even so, we cannot reject the idea that authentic video supports auditory learning in students because, when we look at the results obtained by the members of the control group with the authentic videos, they average 6.5, and the members of experimental group 1 achieved a score of 4.16, which represents a difference of 2.34%, in contrast to the results of the academic audio, where the control group outperformed the experimental group 1 by 3.87%.

So, it is worth asking, why did the control group score lower on the authentic videos, if on the audio it was 8.03%? In this sense, it can be said that authentic videos expose students to the reality of language practice, because authentic videos are representations in which a group of people converse naturally about everyday events in their native language, culture, and other related aspects. Academic audio is constructed with a structure for academic purposes, in which pauses, instructions, tones, among other elements, are considered, allowing students to adapt through frequent practice. This can be statistically confirmed because the members of experimental group 1 obtained a score of 5.61 higher than they did with the authentic video.

Table 2. Results of experimental group 2

Group experiment	Expected result	Result
$AAC=8.03 > VAGE2=5.16$	$VAGE2 \geq AAC$	Negative
$VAC=6.5 > VAGE2=5.16$	$VAGE2 \geq VAC$	Negative
$AAC=8.03 > AAGE2=6.71$	$AAC \geq AAGE2$	Positive
$VAC=6.5 < AAGE2=6.71$	$VAC \geq AAGE2$	Negative

Source: Authors' elaboration.

In experimental group 2, the negative result is maintained, and the difference between the academic audio value of the control group is reduced, given that the authentic video value of experimental group 2, composed of students from the bachelor's degree in Tourism, is 5.16, i.e., one percentage point higher than experimental group 1.

Although the result of the second comparison is negative, the difference in value between the authentic video of the control group and that of experimental group 2 is only 1.34 points, which means that authentic videos are teaching tools for strengthening listening skills.

In the third analysis, the academic audio of the control group obtained a higher value than the academic audio of experimental group 2. This result confirms the initial assumption that ($AAC \geq AAE2$) the value of the academic audio of the control group is higher than the value of the academic audio of experimental group 2, therefore, the result is positive as shown in Table 2.

In this last analysis, it was expected that the percentage value of the authentic videos in the control group would be greater than or equal to the average value of the academic audio in experimental group 2. However, the opposite was true: the value of the authentic video in the control group is lower than the value of the academic audio in experimental group 2 ($VAC=6.5 < AAE2=6.71$), therefore, the result is negative.

The data show that students obtained better overall results with the academic audio. However, the difference in performance suggests an important phenomenon:

- Students are more accustomed to academic audio.
- Authentic videos introduce greater linguistic complexity.

Pedagogical interpretation of performance.

Although academic audio recordings show higher scores, authentic videos provide educational benefits:

- They prepare students to understand the language in real-life situations.
- They reduce dependence on artificial academic structures.
- They strengthen contextual inference, a key skill in oral communication.

The experimental groups obtained lower results than the control group, which is attributed to the latter's greater prior exposure to pedagogically structured tools. However, the difference between groups is not as wide as might be expected, suggesting that authentic videos do generate a partial improvement in listening skills.

V. Conclusion

The evidence presented in this research paper is the first approximation of how authentic videos influence the acquisition of listening skills. The experiment, which was conducted with 30 intermediate-level English students, allows us to describe the support provided by videos as a teaching strategy, beyond the expected results that their values would be greater than or equal to those of academic audio recordings to be considered widely useful. It is worth highlighting the contribution of videos and academic audio recordings as tools that contribute to the acquisition of listening skills in language learning.

The reasons for not rejecting the idea that authentic videos support audiovisual learning can be found

in the work of Ríos Garduño (2009), who outlines four essential elements that videos contribute to auditory language learning. The first element has to do with motivation, meaning that videos combine sound with images and are more appealing to the language learner because the message can be obtained more effectively in a more real way. The second refers to communication, stating that video prepares students for communication through different types of activities. The third element consists of nonverbal aspects related to body movement, which helps to understand the message being conveyed. Fourthly, there are cultural differences, which refer to the fact that the videos show cultural aspects of the speakers' language.

The above is demonstrated by the results of the comparison between the two experimental groups and the control group, in which the percentage of 8.03 obtained by the members of the control group with the academic audio is reduced to 6.5 with the authentic videos. The experimental groups move in the first group by 4.16 and the second group by 5.16%. These data show that academic audio recordings allow for better results for all three groups, probably because throughout their academic careers as students of a second language such as English, they have used academic audio recordings with pauses, instructions, and standardized content more frequently. It has been demonstrated that academic audio recordings are tools that support listening comprehension learning, given that all members of the groups analyzed obtained better results with academic audio recordings and the percentage results with authentic videos decreased for all three groups in question.

Based on the evidence obtained from the experiment, it can be concluded that authentic videos support language listening comprehension due to the numerical differences between the experimental and control groups, even though they favor the control group. These differences are not quite considerable, given that academic audio recordings are designed for pedagogical purposes with dialogues and guidelines for comprehension. Authentic videos support auditory learning because they present real-life dialogue at the speed of real speech, as well as offering visual movements and gestures that help students define what is being said.

Based on the above, teachers and researchers might implement the following activities to enrich and experience other perspectives on this topic:

1. Integrate authentic videos of different genres (interviews, series, news, home videos).
2. Use English subtitles in the initial stages, gradually removing them.
3. Implement pre- and post-video activities to activate knowledge and consolidate understanding.
4. Increase the frequency of exposure to natural audiovisual content.
5. Design comprehension tests that include multimodal elements.

Finally, the following future lines of research are proposed to study the use of authentic videos.

1. Evaluate the difference in impact between basic, intermediate, and advanced students.

2. Analyze long-term listening comprehension after repeated exposure.

3. Compare authentic videos with educational videos.

4. Study students' emotions when exposing them to real materials.

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