

# Simplifying the Text or Simplifying the Task: How to Improve Listening Comprehension

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**ABSTRACT:** The present study was conducted to investigate the differences between using authentic and pedagogical materials. To run the study two groups were formed: one authentic (AMG) and one pedagogical (PMG). Using an IELTS listening section, 48 intermediate learners were chosen and divided into two groups. AMG participants were taught by three feature films and PMG learners were taught by pedagogical movies. Learners' performance on the post-test revealed a significant gain for AMG. The results supported the use of authentic material provided that the task demand is reduced. Besides, AMG students demonstrated a great self-confidence in dealing with authentic situations.

**Keywords:** Authentic movies, Listening comprehension, Pedagogical movies, Task simplification, Text simplification.

## **La simplificación del texto o la simplificación de la tarea: Cómo mejorar la comprensión auditiva**

**RESUMEN:** El presente estudio se realizó para investigar las diferencias entre el uso de materiales auténticos y pedagógicos. Para llevar a cabo el estudio el estudio se formaron dos grupos: uno auténtico (AMG) y pedagógico (PMG). Se usó una sección del IELTS, que se utilizó con una selección de 48 estudiantes de nivel intermedio divididos en dos grupos. Los participantes AMG se les pasó tres largometrajes y los alumnos PMG se les enseñaron películas pedagógicas. La respuesta de los estudiantes en el test final reveló un aumento significativo de los AMG. Los resultados apoyan el uso de material auténtico siempre que la demanda de la tarea se reduzca. Además, los estudiantes AMG demostraron una gran autoconfianza en sí mismo cuando se enfrentaban a situaciones reales.

**Palabras clave:** cine auténtico, comprensión auditiva, películas pedagógicas, la simplificación de tareas, la simplificación del texto.

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

In the history of teaching listening comprehension, the issue of authenticity of second language materials has always been a point of discussion for both theoreticians and practitioners. More interestingly, a consensus has not even been reached on what type of materials can be considered authentic. The definition broadly accepted in the language teaching profession in the 1970s and 1980s was that authentic texts were samples of language

being used for real communication between native speakers, and not specifically recorded for language teaching purposes (Lynch, 2009). Nunan (1989) also defines them as being any material which has not been specifically produced for the purpose of language teaching. Later, Widdowson (1983) made some modifications to the concept of authenticity and divided it into two different aspects 'genuine' and 'authentic'. According to Widdowson a text is considered genuine if it represents the typical language used in real life situations, on the other hand, the term 'authentic', refers to the appropriateness of the response from the listener or reader. In other words, genuineness was related to text; authenticity was related to task (Lynch, 2009). Whether we call this type of material "genuine or authentic", its application has experienced a process of back and forth in the profession. First, with the emergence of Audio Lingual Method, graded materials were produced and texts were simplified to match the proficiency level of the students. However, since the ultimate goal of language teaching was to prepare learners for actual encounters with real life situations and native speakers, serious concerns were raised about the efficacy of graded materials. For instance, Close (1965) and Broughton (1965) doubted the usefulness of pedagogical materials by stating that language learners are exposed to texts which are not representative of the target language they are learning. Crystal & Davy (1975) also questioned the adequacy of pedagogical materials on the grounds that there is a gap between these texts and the real life usage of language, and that they are a poor representation of their real life counterparts. Swaffar (1985) even argues that simplification of the language is not only unhelpful but also detrimental to the comprehension process by removing the "authorial cues" which are available in original texts. With the advent of CLT, however, there was a shift towards using authentic materials which were respected for their meaning communicating nature rather than representing mere linguistic forms (Gilmore, 2007). In addition, Widdowson (1983) proposed the idea of using simple in contrast to simplified materials for beginners and authentic ones for intermediate and advanced learners. He deems simplified teaching sources as inadequate due to the fact that they are doctored to match L2 learners' level of proficiency; hence, losing the real-life characteristics of the original text.

## **2. ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF USING AUTHENTIC MATERIALS**

Vandergrift (2007) argues in favor of using authentic materials as the best option, since the ultimate goal of second language learners is to understand the language that is used in real life communications. According to Vandergrift, one possible advantage of using authentic materials is that they seem to be more motivating for L2 learners when there is no threat of evaluation (Peacock, 1997; Vandergrift, 2007). Nuttall (1996) contends that "Authentic texts can be motivating because they are proof that the language is used for real-life purposes by real people." (p.172). In addition, exposure to such texts is considered to result in greater gains in comprehension ability than exposure to simplified texts only (Blanco, 2002). Richards (2006) also pointed out three advantages for incorporation of authentic materials in classrooms: (i) they provide cultural information about the target language, (ii) they provide exposure to real language, and (iii) they support a more creative approach to

teaching. Moreover, according to Chapple and Curtis (2000), the study of authentic materials is intellectually stimulating, challenging and enjoyable for both students and teachers.

Critics of authentic materials, on the other hand, disagree about their effectiveness on several grounds. Richards, (2006), in his article mentions some of them: (a) created materials may be superior to authentic materials because they are generally built around a graded syllabus, (b) authentic materials often contain difficult and irrelevant language and (c) using authentic materials is a burden for teachers.

Additionally, being culturally biased is considered as another disadvantage of authentic materials which is claimed to place an unnecessary burden on learners (Freeman & Holden, 1986; Martinez, 2002).

With regard to the mentioned advantages and disadvantages, there is an ongoing for and against argument among language experts which has resulted in a bulk of experimental research. Parker & Chaudron (1987), for instance, in their study concluded that cognitive and elaborative modifications are useful in helping the comprehension process. Furthermore, Derwing (2006) mentioned improvements in learners' comprehension when pauses were inserted at sentence, clause or phrase boundaries or after key lexical items. Young (1999), however, produced the opposite results. In a study on reading comprehension of Spanish language students, he noted a tendency for better recall scores on authentic, as opposed to simplified, versions of texts. Also, Derwing and Munro (2001), concluded that modifying speed rate did not result in a better comprehension rate. More interestingly, some studies have even found that simplification of input plays no role in enhancing comprehension and sometimes it has the reverse effect (Lautamatti, 1978; Blau, 1982; Bernhardt, 1991; Lotherington-Woloszyn, 1993; young, 1999; Berardo, 2006).

In general, the argument between the two camps has not yet produced a conclusive result. In addition to the lack of consensus, on reviewing the literature, it can be noticed that most of the studies conducted so far have focused on enhancing reading comprehension and only a limited number of them examined the efficiency of authentic materials in teaching listening comprehension. Concerning the fact that "adults spend 40- 50 percent of their communication time on listening, 25-30 percent on speaking, 11-16 percent on reading, and about 9 percent on writing" (Rivers in Gilman and Moody, 1984:331) improving listening comprehension, gains prominence in the process of L2 acquisition. Therefore, due to the fact that the studies on the issue of authenticity in teaching listening are few and far between, a further significance is given to the present study.

### 3. THE REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Rubin (1990) during an eight-week experiment examined 394 American high school students who were learning Spanish. Their levels of proficiency ranged from low to high proficient. All subjects were divided into five groups, three experimental and two control groups. Experimental groups watched some authentic video clips along with receiving training in listening comprehension strategies, but control group *one* could only watch the videos without receiving training lessons. Finally, control group *two* had neither the training nor the videos. The experimental groups and control group *one* outperformed control group

*two* but control group *one* had substantial problems compared to the experimental groups when the text was difficult, since they received no strategy training. Rubin concluded that if authentic materials are used along with some instructions by the teacher, they can be quite helpful for all language learners. But the shortcomings of the study may lie in the fact that since strategy training was involved, the situation must have been the same at least for one of the control groups. It means that one of the control groups should have been exposed to instructional materials and should have received the same training in listening strategies as the experiment groups, to set the ground for a fair comparison.

Weyers (1999) also ran an experiment during two second semester Spanish courses in 1994, at the University of New Mexico which lasted 8 weeks. From among 42 learners registered 37 took part in both pre-and post-test. Students were then divided into two groups, one experimental group and one control group. Both groups followed the routine curriculum of the university but the experimental group was exposed to additional listening training which was an authentic Spanish-language *telenovela*, *María Mercedes* episodic TV program. For post-test the researcher used a standard listening test, Level Two 1994 National Spanish Exam, prepared by the American Association of Teachers of Spanish and Portuguese (AATSP). Level Two was deemed appropriate for the learners at this level of proficiency. At the end of the semester, the result of data analysis was in favor of the experimental group and Weyers concluded that exposure to authentic material is quite helpful in improving listening. But the results may have been confounded, since the amount of exposure to listening materials was not the same for both groups. As the control group had less exposure to listening materials, the significant difference may be attributed to the more exposure of the experimental group.

In another study by Miller (2005), during a three-week experiment, forty-one college students in Japan, who had enrolled in English classes for beginners level, were divided into one experimental and one control group. Both groups were presented with the same amount of listening comprehension training, but differed in the type of material given to them. The control group received training with pedagogical materials and the experimental group received training with unedited news from BBC. The result of the data analysis supported the usefulness of using authentic materials for listening comprehension improvement. Nevertheless, as in the previous study here again the post test was not an authentic listening text, but was the “Final Test selected from *Developing Tactics for Listening, Teacher’s Book*” (Aldorn *et al*, 2003), thus the students’ performance was not measured by the same type of material used for the treatment.

All in all, contrary to the rich literature on the concept of authenticity in language teaching in general, the number of empirical studies carried out in teaching the listening skill, are limited. More research is required to delve into the usefulness of authentic materials.

#### 4. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In the present study the researchers tried to answer the following questions:

1. Does using authentic movies compared to pedagogical movies have any effects on improving listening comprehension ability of EFL learners?
2. What is the role of authentic materials usage on learners’ self confidence?

## 5. METHOD

A quasi-experimental pre-test treatment post-test design was used in the current study. (A summary of the design is provided in Table 1).

## 6. PARTICIPANTS

The participants were recruited from among learners enrolled in a fall English semester at Sadr language center. Initially, 120 learners had registered for intermediate classes. To select and assign the participants into different groups a listening section of an IELTS test was administered. Among registered learners only those who could achieve the intermediate level band score were selected to take part in the study, and only 48 out of 120 met this criterion. They were divided into two groups: a 24 authentic movie group learners (AMG), and a 24 pedagogical movie group learners (PMG).

*Table 1. Design of the study.*

	Pre-test	Treatment (7 weeks)	Post-test
Experimental group (N= 24)	A listening section of an IELTS test	The subjects received the treatment via some feature films. By using advanced organizers and having post listening activities, the task demand was reduced.	A listening section of an IELTS test+ An authentic movie test
Control group (N=24)	A listening section of an IELTS test	The subjects received the treatment via some pedagogical movies designed for the language learners at intermediate and upper intermediate proficiency level.	A listening section of an IELTS test+ An authentic movie test

## 7. PRE-TEST AND POST-TEST

All the students took one pretest and two post tests.

In order to administer the post test, an unseen 2-minute part of an authentic movie entitled "Alvin and Chipmunks" was screened for the learners. The movie was chosen

because on analysis, the dialogues in “Alvin and Chipmunks” were usually in standard English and shared the characteristics of standard pronunciation. Before administering the pretest, a general theme of the movie was explained to participants so they would have an overall picture of the story. The selected 2-minute section was played twice to the learners. The first time, they watched the part and transcribed it after the intervals, but they were not allowed to write down anything while the movie was being played in order to utilize both auditory and visual channels (as happens in real life listening contexts), and also to avoid interference of the next segment which was played afterwards (Cross, 2009). The second time, they could check their transcriptions and correct the mismatches.

The authentic movie which was used for pre and post test was different from the authentic movies worked on in the class for the experimental groups in order to avoid any possible bias in favor of the AMG. The learners’ transcriptions were used for data analysis. However, due to the fact that there was no standard authentic test available, the validity of data and the results of the authentic movie test for pre and post test could be under question; therefore, to alleviate the validity concern and to have a broadly reliable and valid criterion, all the subjects sat a standard test which was an actual IELTS exam (only the listening part). Two different listening parts of IELTS tests were used: one as pre test and the other one as post test.

## 8. THE PROCEDURE

This study was conducted during a fall English course, which usually lasts 7 weeks (three sessions each week). Before starting the semester, all participants sat an IELTS test. From among 120 subjects, 48 intermediate subjects were selected and assigned into two groups: an Authentic Movie Group (AMG) and a Pedagogical Movie Group (PMG) with 24 learners each. However, they were divided into four different classes with each class containing 12 learners, since the norm population of the institute is 10 to 15. Moreover, all participants were taught by the same instructor. In the first session of the term, the IELTS test, explained in the previous section, was administered as pre test. And from the second session, the experimental treatment was conducted for both groups as follows.

AMG: the Authentic Movie Group worked on three feature films entitled “The Blind Side (129 minutes)”, “The Lake house (99 minutes)” and “The Truman show (129 minutes)”. These three movies were selected based on the criteria of having a standard speaking format and being similar in terms of their genre (drama). After selection, the movies were divided into roughly equal 20 minute parts. This means that sixteen 20 minute parts were prepared to be worked on during the semester (in each session, one part was displayed). Some may question the credibility of the feature films (to be considered authentic) due to the fact that they are scripted and played by actors. However, Hedge (2000) considers them authentic and some other scholars argue that the language used in these movies approximates to what L2 learners would encounter in real life (Terrell, 1993; Weyer, 1999); therefore, in a way, they can be considered authentic.

In order to run the study, the experiment required that in each session the AMG watch a 20 minute section of the movie in class. The instructor gave a brief summary of the

movie in English prior to its viewing to provide the participants with an overall picture of the story. This summary served as an advance organizer to assist the participants' comprehension of the development of the story line. In addition, before watching each section of the movie, the participants received a list of questions written in English to answer while watching it. The questions focused on the general points of the movie to simplify the task of listening (e.g. what did A and B talk about at work). These questions were presented in the chronological order of the storyline development to avoid any task confusion. Moreover, the students were required to answer the questions in Persian to avoid the drawback of being distracted by the writing task (Buck, 2001). The question list served as an advance organizer that allowed the participants to predict what they were about to listen to and hear selectively (Omaggio Hadley, 1993). Then, the answers were collected to be used in post listening activities. During the post listening activity, the section was played for a second time for further analysis. During the second analysis, first, the participants were instructed to listen only for the key words and not to pay attention to all words, to avoid overloading their short term memory, (Chastain, 1998). A teacher sample would show them how to spot and attend to the key words. Then, at the points where important ideas were conveyed, the instructor would stop the movie so the participants could discuss the general idea. The students could compare their understanding with the actual idea that had been communicated in the dialogs. In this way, they were also able to improve their metacognitive strategies (Cross, 2009). Moreover, the subjects were encouraged to guess the meaning of the key vocabularies by using the contexts and develop strategies to deal with unfamiliar words which could block comprehension. Besides, the features of natural speech (such as contractions elisions and etc) were explained to students to familiarize them with the characteristics of real life communication.

**PMG:** The pedagogical group participants worked on some episodic parts of the movies of Interchange book 3 and the How Do You Do series, designed for intermediate level learners. The total amount of time was about 320 minutes, similar to the AMG. Then, in every session a 20 minute section of the pedagogical materials was displayed to the subjects to be worked on. The same procedure was also followed for this group. First, before showing the movie a general theme of the story was explained to the participants. Then, a list of questions was given to the learners to be answered (in Persian) while watching the section. These activities served as an advance organizer. Similar to AMG, during while-listening activities, the sections were shown so that the students could answer the questions. Then, on the second viewing, the participants were firstly instructed to listen only for the key words and not to pay attention to all of the words to avoid overloading their short term memory. Like AMG, a teacher sample would show them how to spot and attend to the key words. Next, they would also share their comprehension of the section and guess the meanings of the new vocabularies. Besides, to avoid any bias in favor of AMG the features of natural speech were explained to learners to familiarize them with the characteristics of real life communication ( e.g. it would be stated that in these situations, in a normal conversation, the speakers use contraction or elision to pronounce the word or the sentence).

The specific procedure for each group was followed for 16 consecutive sessions. In their last session, at the end of the semester, all groups were post tested by a 2-minute

section of the authentic movie (Alvin and Chipmunks) and like the pre-test, all subjects sat an IELTS test on the following day to avoid the fatigue incurred by having two exams in a short space of time. Next, the authentic movie group learners participated individually in a semi-structured interview to give their ideas about the kind of material to which they had been exposed and their perceived improvements.

## 9. DATA ANALYSIS

For the authentic movie post test, the transcriptions were first analyzed according to the number of correct words transcribed. The ratio of exact number of words transcribed to the whole number of words in the script of that 2-minute part was computed. Then the ratio of whole words transcribed, whether exact or paraphrased (somehow synonymous), to the whole number of words in the script of that 2-minute part was computed. For the next step, the numbers of sentences were analyzed. In this regard, the ratio of the exact number of sentences transcribed, to the whole number of sentences in the script of that 2-minute part was computed. Then the ratio of whole sentences transcribed, whether exact or paraphrased (just conveying the meaning), to the whole number of sentences available in the script of that 2-minute part was computed. Then at the end, all four scores were added up, and then divided into four to extract a total mean score for the pre test and post test for each learner. The performance of all groups on the pre -test and post -test was analyzed using a *t*-test statistical procedure. For the second pre and post test, students' scores were calculated according to the answer keys provided by the Cambridge IELTS books and the subjects' performance on pre and post tests was compared using an independent *t*-test. The detailed analysis is demonstrated in the following section.

As demonstrated in Figure 1, the mean score obtained on the post-test for authentic movie learners (7.17) is higher than the one obtained on the post-test for pedagogical movie learners (5.79). However, an independent sample *t*-test was run to capture the possible significance of the observed difference.

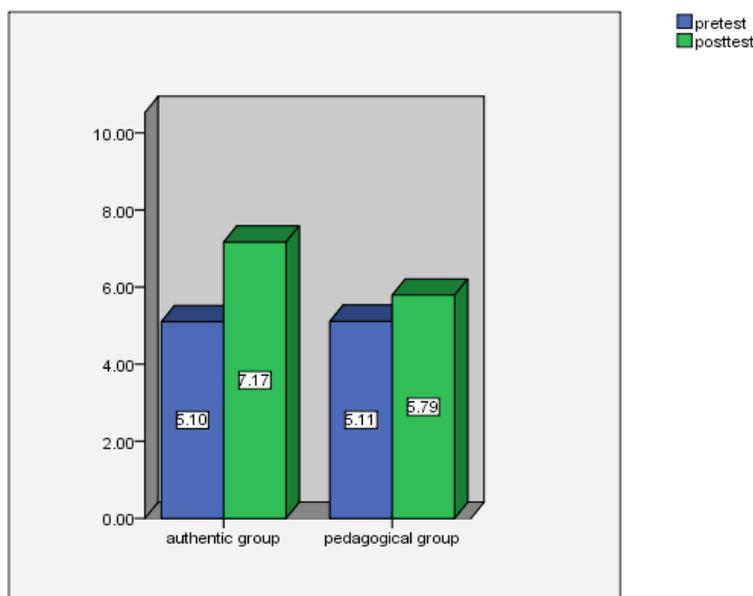


Figure 1. Mean scores in percentages for the authentic and pedagogical groups on the IELTS test.

Table 2, indicates a significant difference in the scores obtained from the two groups, authentic and pedagogical, on the post- test ( $t(46) = 16.292, P=.000$ ) while there was no significant difference on their pre-test( $t(46)= -0.220, P=0.827$ ).

Our first research question concerned whether using authentic movies compared to pedagogical movies has any effect on improving the listening comprehension ability of EFL learners. This question can be answered by considering the results of the post-test in Table 3. The *p value* (.000) in this table is indicative of the considerable difference between the experimental and control groups in terms of listening comprehension improvement. Therefore, the results of the independent-sample *t*-test confirm that on the IELTS post-test, subjects of the AMG have outperformed those in the PMG. Given the fact that the control and experimental groups were equal on the pre-test and that the only factor that distinguished the two groups was the experimental group's exposure to the feature films, it may be logical to attribute the observed difference to the treatment that the experimental group received.

Additionally, to make sure about the credibility of the significance of the data, Effect Size for the independent sample *t*-test was calculated by the Eta squared formula which is .85. The guidelines (proposed by Cohen, 1988) for interpreting this value are: .01=small effect, .06=moderate effect, .14=large effect. Hence, for the current *t*-test it can be observed that the demonstrated effect size (.85) is considered large.

Tabla 2. Groups Statistics for IELTS Test.

	groups	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
pretest	authentic group	24	5.1000	.19560	.03993
	pedagogical group	24	5.1125	.19850	.04052
posttest	authentic group	24	7.1667	.32660	.06667
	pedagogical group	24	5.7917	.25353	.05175

Table 3. Independent t-test results for authentic and pedagogical groups on the IELTS test.

		Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2- tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference
pretest	Equal variances assumed	.833	-.220	46	.827	-.01250	.05689
	Equal variances not assumed		-.220	45.99 0	.827	-.01250	.05689
posttest	Equal variances assumed	.390	16.292	46	.000	1.37500	.08440
	Equal variances not assumed		16.292	43.33 5	.000	1.37500	.08440

Furthermore, for the second test (the authentic movie test) the same data analysis procedures were followed, to compute a more detailed difference between the groups.

Table 4 shows the descriptive statistics for mean scores on the authentic listening test for both experimental and control groups. As it is displayed in the table, the AMG learners had the mean score of 71.79 for the post test compared to the pedagogical group learners' mean 48.97. However, an independent sample *t*-test was run to establish whether or not the differences between the mean scores are statistically meaningful.

Table 5 shows that there is a significant difference in the scores obtained from the two groups, since the probability value is substantially smaller than the specified critical value ( $P=0.000$  &  $t(46) = 14.802$ ). This indicates that there is a meaningful difference between the groups' performance on the authentic test in favor of the AMG. Therefore, in common with the IELTS test, the answer to the first research question (whether or not using authentic movies compared to pedagogical movies have any effect on improving the listening comprehension ability of EFL learners) indicates a significant difference. Thus, in comparison to the pedagogical movies, it was revealed that using authentic movies exercises a significant positive effect on the listening comprehension improvement of the learners. This means the AMG subjects performed better on listening comprehension test via exposure to the authentic movie.

However, Effect size was calculated by Eta squared Formula as well, to ensure the significance of the data. The result was .82, which in Cohen's (1988) terms would be considered large.

*Table 4. Group Statistics for the authentic Test.*

Movietype	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Authentic	24	71.7915	6.86959	1.40225
Pedagogical	24	48.9666	3.14309	.64158

*Table 5. The Independent t-test results for authentic and pedagogical groups on the authentic movie test.*

	F	Sig.	T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference
Equal variances assumed	12.846	.001	14.802	46	.000	22.82486	1.54205
Equal variances not assumed			14.802	32.225	.000	22.82486	1.54205

Furthermore, the results of interviews conducted after the post test indicated that 85% percent of the learners found the authentic materials quite helpful. They also pointed out that they would continue working with these types of materials in the future. Moreover, 80% of the subjects claimed that they prefer authentic materials to pedagogical ones. More importantly, authentic materials could improve learners' self confidence. 95% of the learners mentioned that they have become more self confident to deal with ungraded listening materials in the future.

## 10. DISCUSSION

This study investigated the effects of using authentic materials on the listening comprehension ability of L2 learners. Our first research question concerned whether there is any difference between using authentic materials and pedagogical materials in terms of their effect on listening comprehension. The results demonstrated that integrating authentic listening materials into L2 classrooms can exercise a positive effect on listening comprehension of L2 learners, provided that the task given to them is suitable for their level of proficiency.

The rationale for the findings may be explained by three factors. First, it can possibly be the inherent difference between the kind of language which is used in pedagogical and real-life situations (Crystal & Davy 1975). According to Widdowson (1983) the simplified listening texts are doctored to fit the proficiency levels of the learners and this makes the language unnatural. In contrast, authentic materials are best suited to achieve comprehension of every day speech, because they reflect real-life listening, and allow for exposure to different varieties of language (Vandergrift, 2007). Therefore, according to Blanco (2002) the exposure to the natural use of language and working on every day conversation may explain the better performance of AMG on both tests.

Second, as Field (1998) suggests, reducing the task demand instead of using simplified materials, can help the learners to deal with the authentic materials which are beyond their language competence. This can result in a sense of self-achievement in the learners which in turn can lead to a better performance (Vandergrift, 2007). As mentioned by some of the subjects in the interview, their comprehension of the dialogs was helped by answering the questions about the general points given to them in the pre-listening, and then discussing their understanding in the post listening activities for checking their comprehension.

Finally, the findings of the present study, in a way, may be explained by the process approach to teaching listening comprehension. As the process approach may help learners to achieve the know-how knowledge of dealing with ungraded materials (Vandergrift, 2010). In line with Hulstijn (2003) teaching the learners not to listen to every single word, helps them to avoid overloading their short term memory, which consequently, can lead to better comprehension. In the interview, the participants pointed out that they managed to comprehend more by being taught to attend to key words in the conversation and getting familiar with the features of real life conversation. This is in agreement with Rubin (1990), arguing that if the authentic materials are taught along with some guidelines and strategy training by the teacher, the learners can gain greater improvements. It also accords Field (2008), purporting that the incorporation of the process approach in teaching listening helps the learners to perform like an experienced listener.

Therefore, the findings support the earlier evidence that listening practice with authentic materials has merit (Vandergrift, 2007). In accordance with Herron (1995), it was found that exposure to authentic materials can lead to a further gain for the learners. Also the same as Miller (2005) and Weyers (1999), the results of the present study favored the efficacy of non-simplified listening materials and supported its exploitation as a part of L2 classrooms. However, in contrast with Brown (1987) and Ridgway (2000) who favor pedagogical materials, the results of this study suggest that with the same training and exposure time, authentic materials may be more effective.

The second research question of this study concerned the role of authentic materials on improving the learners' self confidence. In the interview conducted after the study, 95 percent of the participant of the AMG stated that they feel more self confident to deal with ungraded materials in the future. They mentioned that till then, they had been afraid of working on authentic materials since they thought they were not competent enough linguistically. One possible explanation for the better performance of the AMG could be the removal of the fear of confronting the materials designed for native speakers (Krashen, 1981). Since such fear could increase stress, which according to Rai, Loschky, Harris, Peck and Cook (2010) could, consequently, impede the listening comprehension process. Therefore, as mentioned by the participants in the interview, working on the authentic materials helped them to overcome their stress to some extent.

## 11. CONCLUSION

The present study attempted to investigate the possible effects of using authentic materials on the listening comprehension ability of L2 listeners. The findings indicated that first, integrating authentic material into L2 classrooms is helpful in improving the listening comprehension of the learners. Second, authentic materials have the potential to make lear-

ners more self confident in their future encounters with the listening materials designed for native speakers. However, caution must be taken to design appropriate tasks which match the proficiency level of the listeners.

In addition, further studies are required on the controversial issue of using authentic materials to capture the possible effect of task simplification and scaffolding learners' attempt in listening comprehension activities for the beginner second/foreign language learners. When beginners are of concern, authentic listening materials may be effective, if the instructor is able to remove the undue pressure of the task by giving the learners the kind of activity which is adjusted to their potential (Field, 1998). Moreover, for investigating the possible role of authentic material on the self confidence of L2 listeners, the scarcity of comprehensive experimental studies is felt.

Finally, it is worth mentioning that one of the limitations of the present study is the proficiency level of the learners. In this study, only intermediate students were examined which limits the generalizability of the findings. Further studies are required to investigate the effect of authentic materials on beginners and advanced learners. Moreover, the subjects of this study were only adult English learners which can endanger the generalizability of the results; hence, further studies are necessary to investigate the effect of authentic material on young language learners.

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### 13. INDEX

1. How did you find the authentic movie compared to the pedagogical movies that you used to work on? How do you think authentic materials helped you?
2. Do you prefer to work on the same types of materials in the future or you would prefer to work on the pedagogical ones?
3. Do you feel more self-confident to confront the real life listening situation or not? Why?
4. Do you feel that you improved more with the authentic movies compared to the pedagogical ones?
5. Do you think the way you were taught helped you to improve your listening comprehension? How?