Capítulo I

The effectiveness of authentic materials through technology on seventh graders' listening comprehension skills

La eficacia de los materiales auténticos a través de la tecnología en la capacidad de comprensión oral de los alumnos de séptimo grado.

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1. Introduction

Listening plays a paramount role in English language acquisition, enabling learners to understand and interpret the spoken language. Indeed, Khaydarov (2023) defines this ability as a fundamental pillar to build up other language.

skills such as speaking, reading, and writing. In Ecuador, the Ministry of Education aims for students at elementary educational levels to develop their listening comprehension which helps them to identify and comprehend relevant information conveyed by native speakers in familiar contexts.

Many researchers have found out that elementary school students often struggle with listening comprehension skills, especially in predicting information, sequencing events, and understanding the main ideas, specific details, and vocabulary conveyed in audiovisual materials, which makes them feel bored and frustrated (Iliyasova and Seidaliyeva, 2022). In that sense, the use of authentic materials through technology has been considered an effective and innovative solution for developing this skill since they increase students' motivation and interest in learning the English language within real-life situations (Barzani et al., 2022). As an additional fact, they allow students to infer, recognize general messages, identify essential parts, understand keywords, and systematically order the events mentioned in the audiovisuals (Arsy et al., 2020; Páez, 2021; Mamadaminovich, 2021; Simamora and Oktaviani, 2020; Williams, 2018).

Considering the reasons given, this research seeks to improve English listening comprehension skills through the use of authentic materials among seventh-grade students at an elementary private school. On the basis of this objective, the following research question was stated: What is the level of improvement in English listening comprehension sub-skills when using authentic materials through technology among seventh-grade students at an elementary school? This will help to gain a deeper insight into the influence of authentic materials on listening comprehension and understand their practical usages within the field of teaching listening in English as a Foreign Language.

Bearing this information in mind, the present study outlines the following 7 sections: 1) "Abstract", which briefly describes the essentials of the research. 2) "Introduction" that presents the issue, the main rationale, and the importance of the study. 3) "Materials and methods" show procedures, instruments, and techniques employed to develop the study. 4) "Results" underlines the main findings before and after the intervention. 5) "Discussion", compares and contrasts the results obtained with the previous body of literature. 6) "Conclusions", state the key implications reached after the data analysis. 7) "References", which finally list the authors cited in the body text of this study

2.   Literature review

The present section describes the theoretical foundations of two main titles such as (1) authentic materials and (2) listening comprehension skills. The former included the definition of authentic materials, their influence on EFL learning, and some of their types. The latter involved its conceptualization and the five sub-skills. All of this information was collected from different researchers, sources, and databases like Google Scholar and ERIC.

What are authentic materials?

Authentic materials refer to the spoken and written materials produced by native speakers that provide the audience with different real-life situations. According to Ruzievna (2022), these materials are created when speakers naturally and spontaneously use language to communicate with each other. Therefore, they are excellent resources to expose students to real discourse and increase their vocabulary to interact with the globalized world.

Authentic materials on English as a Foreign Language

Some studies on the use of authentic materials in language teaching argue that these materials can increase learners' motivation and interest in learning English, as they can relate to the topics and themes presented in them. Additionally, authentic

materials promote communicative competence because they provide learners with rich and diverse linguistic input, enabling them to encounter a range of vocabulary, grammar, and language functions. Finally, the authors suggest that using authentic materials can enhance learners' cultural awareness and understanding of the target language, as they can learn about the cultural and social context in which the language is used. These findings support the idea that authentic materials can be an effective tool for language learning, as they allow learners to engage with language in a more meaningful way and develop a deeper understanding of its cultural and social background (Joraboyev, 2021; Mufarrohah and Munir, 2022; Rao, 2019).

The implementation of authentic materials in the classroom offers a wide variety of advantages to the English language teaching-learning process, as they provide students with direct exposure to real language that prepares them to communicate effectively in the modern world. In this sense, Barzani et al. (2022) mention that "Using these materials to teach English will make the learning experience much more exciting, creative and inspiring for students" (p.3). As a result, the students will feel more motivated and develop a close relationship with the target language through the language skills such as speaking, reading, listening, and writing.

Another positive aspect of authentic materials is that they enable learners to acquire cultural aspects of the target language and successfully develop their listening comprehension skills. According to Iliyasova and Seidaliyeva (2022), authentic audio-visual materials help students to distinguish real situations of the language, recognize semantic changes, and correctly understand the spoken messages conveyed by native speakers. Thus, it can be concluded that these resources make students better listeners and communicators.

Types of authentic materials

There are three types of authentic materials that can be used to improve listening comprehension skills. As Fachraini and Sartika (2019) state "Authentic materials can be in the form of printed, video and audio that can be found around them such

as newspapers, magazines, photos, reality shows, soap operas, short films, radio broadcasts, and others" (p. 277). Together, these resources help students to learn the English language in different real-life situations.

In this context, platforms like YouTube cover some authentic materials such as cartoons, conversations, TED talks, documentaries, and songs which can be selected taking into consideration the students' level, interests, and age.

Cartoons. Type of authentic material presents animated characters that describe stories humorously and give a moral about something. According to Ozer (2020), "Cartoons are children's programs that convey messages to children with scenarios and heroes by bringing life to drawn lines" (p.1349). That is to say, these cartoons are authentic materials focused on entertaining students, developing their creativity, and improving both their language skills and their cognitive skills.

Many researchers have shown that cartoons are highly effective in developing listening comprehension skills, as they include funny dialogues between characters that attract students' attention and curiosity. To illustrate this statement, Saputri et al. (2019) conducted a study with tenth-grade students, in which they concluded that cartoons helped participants to easily identify the main idea and sequence the events presented in the audiovisuals. They also highlighted cartoons as useful resources to increase students' vocabulary and promote their active participation during English lessons.

TED Talks. Labeled as a video authentic material, TED (Technology, Entertainment, and Design) has been broadly studied as an EFL resource to promote the development of listening comprehension (Wu, 2020). The essence of this material relies on the presentation of short films and conferences developed by expert speakers who seek to motivate listeners through their genuine experiences. This is what makes TED talks a splendid and authentic resource for improving EFL students' listening skills (Mojgan and Tollabi, 2019) since they immerse learners into real and spontaneous contexts such as real-world issues which Wu (2020) remarked as an efficacious manner to gain learners' attention.

Furthermore, among the language learning advantages of this resource, Ghory and Ghafory (2021) remarked the speakers' voice rate, speech accuracy, and quality, subtitles, and translations, along with the feature of watching and re-watching a lesson multiple times stated by Tilwani et al. (2022). Due to this wide range of elements, learners realize and benefit from the usage of the English language in diverse contexts, training their listening skills while obtaining new knowledge in turn (Tilwani et al., 2022).

Songs. In the research of Güler and Bozkurt (2021), they discussed why songs should be considered an authentic pedagogical resource to teach EFL listening. They explained the potential of these tools in lowering students' anxiety, improving students' listening skills, and nurturing positive attitudes toward English learning. These results joined the implications presented by Samad and Paris (2022) who stated that songs are meant to be beneficial in training at maximum students' listening comprehension since, in nature, songs demand learners to consciously recognize, discriminate, and analyze the words embedded in the lyrics to fully understand the meaning and intention of them. Thus, activities such as filling in the blank, catching the word, or blind listening (without looking at the song lyrics) are totally recommended to encourage students to academically train their listening comprehension (Melisa, Silviyanti, and Syamaun, 2022).

Conversations. Conversations that portray authentic examples of what native speakers frequently listen to represent a great source for EFL students' listening training (Tuanany, 2020) since learners familiarize themselves with each listening situation. This allows pupils to develop suitable listening strategies and adopt behavioral attitudes, presented in the situations displayed, which help them to comprehend the use of the target language (Alabsi, 2020). Djabborova (2020) recommends teachers introduce this type of authentic material in three stages 1) prompting students about the listening activity with some keywords that allow them to predict what the task will involve, 2) having students confirm their inferences through a range of different tasks, 3) asking learners their opinion on the situation presented, and 4) letting them relate that situation with their own experiences.

Documentary. Documentaries are defined as a form of narrative visualization that provides information beyond simply knowing facts, such as civic and cultural data (Chattoo, 2020). Currently, this authentic material has been increasingly used within the educational field to promote social awareness, influence individuals' behavior, and heighten their motivation towards solving an issue (Hynes, et al., 2020). For instance, Akazhanova (2021) explained that these English films might be implemented as an aid to assist the development of listening comprehension since they recreate scenarios where the target language is spoken by various characters in different accents. This somehow provides students with a general outlook of the language and trains their ears to distinguish numerous speech and non-speech conditions in the form of facts concerning the daily life, culture, and traditions of native speakers.

What is listening comprehension?

Listening comprehension is defined as an active process that consists of receiving and understanding spoken language. Nazarieh et al. (2022) claimed that "listening comprehension is a conscious and dynamic activity used by the learners to construct their own understanding by means of cognition and the existing contextual information" (p. 1). From this definition, it can be stated that listening comprehension is a challenging skill for non-native listeners since they need to identify, discriminate, and interpret the meaning of words and sentences to fully understand verbal messages. Tran and Duong (2020) added that there are two main factors that students need to consider when listening such as "(…) their language knowledge (i.e., vocabulary, sounds, and grammar) and background knowledge to comprehend what is spoken" (pp. 79-80). Based on this rationale, it can be understood that listening comprehension is a process that connects the language components with the context given during discourse.

Importance of listening comprehension skills

The ability to comprehend spoken language is vital for effective communication and language learning. In other words, nurturing this skill can represent improvements

in other language competencies, including speaking, reading, and writing as well as facilitate vocabulary, grammar, intonation, and pronunciation growth. Furthermore, the development of listening comprehension cultivates autonomous learning, which enables students to access authentic language sources beyond the classroom. Given these benefits, educators must prioritize the development of listening skills in their English language curriculums to equip learners with the language proficiency needed to acquire essential language skills that can benefit them in various aspects of their lives (Kuchkarova, 2021)

Listening comprehension sub-skills

As noted by Nazira et al. (2019), the listening comprehension sub-skills can be evidenced through several activities in which students recognize general and specific information of the aural material to answer the questions provided by the teacher. Within this framework, the most commonly used listening sub-skills are listening for predicting, listening for gist, listening for specific information, listening for understanding vocabulary, and listening for sequencing which allow students to effectively understand the content of authentic materials. These are described as follows:

Listening for predicting. It is a sub-skill that requires students to employ their prior knowledge to predict the content of visual material. Bao and Guan (2019) suggest that prediction is a cognitive strategy commonly employed to enhance listening comprehension, as it enables learners to establish connections between their learning and the listening material. It is worth noting that this strategy is critical for comprehending the messages conveyed by speakers, as it allows listeners to anticipate the type of information that will be presented during the listening process.

Numerous researchers have conducted various studies to demonstrate the effectiveness of utilizing prediction activities for improving students' listening comprehension abilities. Arsy et al. (2020), in their research, implemented the Predict-Observe-Explain strategy, where they discovered that prediction helps students to actively participate, enhance their knowledge, improve their listening skills, and cultivate both their

creativity and critical thinking abilities. Therefore, it can be concluded that listening for prediction is an exceptional sub-skill that provides students with the necessary background knowledge to contextualize authentic material.

Listening for gist. It refers to the comprehension of the central idea of discourse, irrespective of specific details mentioned in the listening material. Páez (2021) mentions "listener instead of listening to every speaker's words, just focus on the general topic of what they are talking about" (p. 15). As per the concept given by the author, it is crucial for teachers to encourage this sub-skill to facilitate students' understanding of the overall message.

Several authors concur that listening for gist is an effective sub-skill within the listening comprehension process, as it allows students to link their knowledge to the content of authentic material, thereby facilitating their comprehension of spoken language. Fuertes (2021) states that "Besides the other linguistic skills used when listening for gist, a person also uses the context and his/her prior knowledge to help him/her catch the whole picture of auditory messages" (p. 12). This quote supports the fact that listening for the main idea has a positive influence on students because it encourages them to apply their learning while listening to videos or audio.

Additionally, listening for gist can be utilized with various courses and authentic materials that provide students with real-life language. Siegel (2018) highlights that "Gist-level listening can occur with any type of aural text: conversations, lectures, news reports, songs" (p. 1). Based on the quote presented in this paragraph, it can be concluded that listening material should be integrated with listening for gist to motivate students and enhance their interest in acquiring the language.

Listening for specific information. This sub-skill entails identifying the crucial points presented by authentic materials such as songs, YouTube videos, and podcasts. According to Mamadaminovich (2021), this sub-skill refers to comprehending particular details. In general, it involves exposing learners to audiovisual materials in which they must concentrate on the relevant parts given by native speakers through their spoken discourse.

Furthermore, it is essential to note that one of the advantages of employing this sub-skill is that it enables students to listen to the essential parts of videos or audio, such as places, dates, numbers, professions, objects, and names, which are necessary details for comprehending the context of the discourse. In this regard, Lopez and Saldarriaga (2020) state that "This sub-skill will help them find the specific item they are looking for" (p. 18). Based on the viewpoint proposed by the authors, it can be inferred that teachers should promote listening for specific information in the English teaching-learning process to enhance students' listening comprehension skills.

Listening for understanding vocabulary. It discusses students' ability to recognize and comprehend words and phrases used by speakers during the listening process, which is a critical component of listening comprehension in English language learning. Simamora and Oktaviani (2020) emphasize the importance of this sub-skill and suggest that lesson plans should include listening activities that enable students to learn new vocabulary and apply it in real-life contexts.

However, it is worth noting that developing this sub-skill can be challenging for students, as they may encounter difficulty in understanding unfamiliar words and expressions commonly used by native speakers. Namaziandost et al. (2019) conducted a research study that revealed the negative impact of limited vocabulary on students' listening comprehension abilities. Thus, teachers should prioritize vocabulary instruction and provide students with the necessary tools to facilitate their listening process when exposed to authentic material.

Listening for sequencing. The final sub-skill, known as listening for sequencing, involves systematically arranging the information conveyed by the speakers in accordance with the details provided in the authentic materials. Williams (2018) defines this sub-skill as an advanced ability that can be utilized to reinforce students' listening comprehension skills. From this perspective, it can be inferred that sequencing the events narrated in the audio or video is an excellent means to evaluate students' understanding and learning.

Numerous scholars have suggested that listening for sequencing is an effective strategy to enhance students' listening comprehension skills, as it enables them to orderly organize the content heard in videos. In their study, Lopez and Saldarriaga (2020) noted that implementing this strategy made the English teaching and learning process more dynamic and engaging, thereby assisting students in improving their listening comprehension skills and developing various sub-skills, such as listening for predicting, listening for gist, and listening for specific information. Hence, it can be established that listening for sequencing has a positive impact on students during their listening process.

3. Methodology

This study was in nature quantitative, since it targeted the improvement of listening comprehension through authentic materials. Moreover, it utilized the action research design because of the focus provided on solving an educational issue identified by the teacher in turn who operated as a researcher (Gay et al., 2012).

The following study was conducted during the 2022-2023 school year with a population of students belonging to Basic Middle Education at an elementary school in the city of Loja. The sample consisted of a group of twenty-seven seventh-grade students, divided into four males and twenty-three females, with an average age between 11 and 13 years old, who had an A2 level of English language proficiency according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages. This sample was selected by using a convenience method, as participants were chosen based on proximity and accessibility (Dawson, 2016).

The data for this study was collected considering the testing technique (Madsen, 1983) with a researcher-made pre-test and post-test. The pre-test assessed the students' listening comprehension skills before the treatment, while the post-test was employed for analysing the level of improvement of the students' listening comprehension sub-skills after the intervention with authentic materials (Creswell, 2012).

In that sense, the test consisted of one sequencing question and four closed multiple-choice questions that were developed with the selection method, as the students chose the correct answer from a group of options (Gay et al., 2012). These quantitative data obtained from the tests were compared with the national grading scale established by the Ministry of Education through the criterion-referenced scoring proposed by Gay et al. (2012), which was fundamental to determining the students' performance during the assessment process.

The research design used in this study was practical action research, as the pre-service teacher took on the role of a researcher and applied an action plan to improve English listening comprehension skills among seventh graders at an elementary school in Loja. According to Efron and Ravid (2019), practical action research involves six phases, including 1) identifying the problem, 2) gathering background information, 3) designing the study, 4) collecting data, 5) analyzing and interpreting data, and 6) implementing and sharing results.

The initial stage of the study focused on "identifying the problem" in the listening comprehension skills among students in a private school in Loja. This issue was identified during the practices carried out by the pre-service teacher, who noticed the seventh-grade students struggling to understand the listening materials provided in the English classes. Therefore, the target group was selected through convenience sampling due to their significant difficulties in listening skills.

After identifying the problem, the researcher gathered background information related to authentic materials and strategies used in teaching listening. The researcher reviewed the relevant literature on academic journals, books, and online resources. The gathered background information helped to inform the selection of appropriate teaching materials and strategies for the intervention.

The design of the study was aligned with Gagne's nine events of instruction, which included pre-listening activities, while-listening activities, and post-listening activities focused on improving students' listening comprehension skills (Gagne et al., 1916). The

lesson plans were designed with learning objectives, warm-up, objectives discussion, instruction, model, guided practice, independent practice, and assessment.

During the data collection phase, the researcher implemented the intervention plan using authentic materials such as conversations, cartoons, TED talks, documentaries and songs. It was developed over two months in eight weeks. Furthermore, the data was gathered using pre-test and post-test instruments.

The next step was to analyze and interpret the quantitative data collected during the intervention plan. This involved using different frequency tables and graphs to establish conclusions and recommendations. Finally, the results obtained during the research process were shared with the educational community to carry out further studies that allow teachers to improve their students' listening comprehension skills through authentic materials.

The quantitative data collected from the pre-test and post-test were processed by using descriptive statistics (Creswell, 2012) and represented through two frequency tables and a bar graph designed with the Excel program, which helped the researcher to measure the central tendency (mean) of the scores obtained by seventh graders in the five listening comprehension sub-skills such as "listening for predicting", "listening for gist", "listening for specific information", "listening for understanding vocabulary" and "listening for sequencing".

4. Results

The data of this research study were collected with a pre-test and a post-test which allowed researchers to verify the effectiveness of using authentic materials through technology to improve English listening comprehension skills among seventh-grade students at an elementary private school. The results will be presented in tables and a bar graph with their corresponding interpretation and analysis.

4.1. Pre-test results

Table 1

Pre-test scores on the performance of seventh-grade students' listening comprehension skills

Grading scale (2/2)	LP		LG		LI		LV		LS	
	F	(%)	F	(%)	F	(%)	F	(%)	F	(%)
Grades (0–0,5)	7	26	3	11	5	19	8	30	0	0
Grades (0,6–1)	0	0	0	0	9	33	7	26	5	19
Grades (1,1–1,5)	0	0	0	0	0	0	8	30	0	0
Grades (1,6–2)	20	74	24	89	13	48	4	14	22	81
Total of students	**27**	**100**	**27**	**100**	**27**	**100**	**27**	**100**	**27**	**100**
Mean	1,48		1,78		1,39		1,15		1,81	

Note. LP = Listening for predicting, LG = Listening for gist, LI = Listening for specific information, LV = Listening for understanding vocabulary, LS = Listening for sequencing.

The above table illustrates the number and percentage of seventh-grade students who obtained scores between 0-0,5; 0,6-1; 1,1-1,5 and 1,6-2 in each of the listening comprehension sub-skills, such as "listening for predicting", "listening for gist", "listening for specific information", "listening for understanding vocabulary" and "listening for sequencing" during the application of the pre-test before implementing the proposal with authentic materials like cartoons, conversations, TED talks, songs, and documentaries.

From the data shown in Table 1, it can be seen that 74% of students achieved a score between 1,6-2 in the sub-skill of "listening for predicting" since the picture presented by the researcher was easy and clear. On the other hand, 26% of students got a

score between 0-0,5 because they did not correctly predict the topic due to various factors such as lack of motivation, interest, and concentration. Overall, these results revealed a mean score of 1,48 out of 2.

In terms of "listening for gist," the results show that 89% of the participants had a score between 1,6-2, which means that they were able to recognize the main idea from the conversation through the setting and context of the video. In contrast, 11% of them obtained grades between 0-0,5 since they could not understand the authentic material because of the native speakers' dialect and the limited use of this type of vocabulary in the teaching-learning process. In summary, the results indicated a mean score of 1,78 out of 2.

Likewise, Table 1 provides an overview of the sub-skill called "listening for specific information" where 48% of the sample obtained a score between 1,6-2, which shows that students clearly understood the key details of the whole conversation. Instead, 33% of the participants got grades between 0,6-1 due to the complex process of identifying unfamiliar words, phrases, and idiomatic expressions used by native speakers. Finally, 19% of them achieved scores in the range of 0-0,5 since they were not able to comprehend the content of the video. Taken together, these data gave a mean score of 1,39 out of 2.

The quantitative data gathered by the researcher indicate that 30% of the students had grades between 1,1-1,5 in the sub-skill of "listening for understanding vocabulary" because they could comprehend only some words from the authentic material. Likewise, 30% of them reached points in the range of 0-0,5 as they did not know the meaning of the words. On the other hand, 26% of the sample obtained scores between 0,6-1, which revealed that few students understood the vocabulary used during the conversation because of their low level of lexical variety. Last but not least, 14% of the participants achieved a score in the interval of 1,6-2 since they were able to recognize all the words mentioned by the English speakers. Together, these results provided a mean score of 1,15 out of 2.

Finally, the results on the sub-skill of "listening for sequencing" demonstrate that 81% of the participants achieved a score between 1,6-2 because they correctly order the events displayed in the conversation. On the other hand, 19% of them obtained grades in the range of 0,6-1 since they made some mistakes due to the speed of the dialogue between the native speakers. Together these data indicated a mean score of 1,81 out of 2.

Post-test results

Table 2

Post-test scores on the performance of seventh-grade students' listening comprehension skills

Grading scale (2/2)	LP		LG		LI		LV		LS	
	F	(%)	F	(%)	F	(%)	F	(%)	F	(%)
Grades (0–0,5)	3	11	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Grades (0,6–1)	0	0	0	0	2	7	0	0	0	0
Grades (1,1–1,5)	0	0	0	0	0	0	9	33	0	0
Grades (1,6–2)	24	89	27	100	25	93	18	67	27	100
Total of students	**27**	**100**	**27**	**100**	**27**	**100**	**27**	**100**	**27**	**100**
Mean	1,78		2,00		1,93		1,83		2,00	

Note. LP = Listening for predicting, LG = Listening for gist, LI = Listening for specific information, LV = Listening for understanding vocabulary, LS = Listening for sequencing.

Table 2 shows the number and percentage of seventh-grade students who obtained scores between 0-0,5; 0,6-1; 1,1-1,5 and 1,6-2 in the five listening comprehension sub-skills, such as "listening for predicting", "listening for gist", "listening for specific information", "listening for understanding vocabulary" and "listening for sequencing"

during the administration of the post-test after two months of the intervention plan with authentic materials like conversations, TED talks, songs, cartoons, and documentaries.

As can be seen from Table 2, 89% of the participants obtained scores between 1,6-2 in the sub-skill of "listening for predicting" since they correctly predicted the content of the video based on the setting of the picture, which helped them to have a prior idea of what the conversation was going to be about. On the other hand, 11% of them had grades in the range of 0-0,5 due to a lack of concentration during the assessment process. Taken together, these results indicated a mean score of 1,78 out of 2.

Moreover, Table 2 shows that the sub-skill called "listening for gist" was improved by 100% of the seventh-year students who achieved a score between 1,6-2, which means that they were able to identify and choose the main idea of the English conversation. Overall, the data revealed a mean score of 2 out of 2.

Regarding "listening for specific information", data reveal that 93% of the students obtained scores in the range of 1,6-2 since they understood all the essential parts of the conversation between the native speakers, which allowed them to complete the test successfully. In contrast, 7% of the participants achieved a score between 0,6-1 because they still had problems identifying key details. Together, these data provided a mean score of 1,93 out of 2.

In addition, the results presented in Table 2 demonstrate that 67% of the students achieved a score between 1,6-2 in the sub-skill of "listening for understanding vocabulary" because they identified all the words mentioned by the native speakers. However, 33% of them obtained grades in the interval of 1,1-1,5 since they struggled to understand some of the expressions used during the English conversation. In summary, the results gave a mean score of 1,83 out of 2.

Finally, the data collected by the researcher in the sub-skill of "listening for sequencing" indicates that 100% of the students obtained a score between 1,6-2 since all of them could correctly order the events of the conversation. As a result, the mean score was 2 out of 2.

4.3. Comparison of the Pre-test and Post-test results

Figure 1

Comparison between pre-test and post-test total means on the performance of seventh-grade students' listening comprehension skills
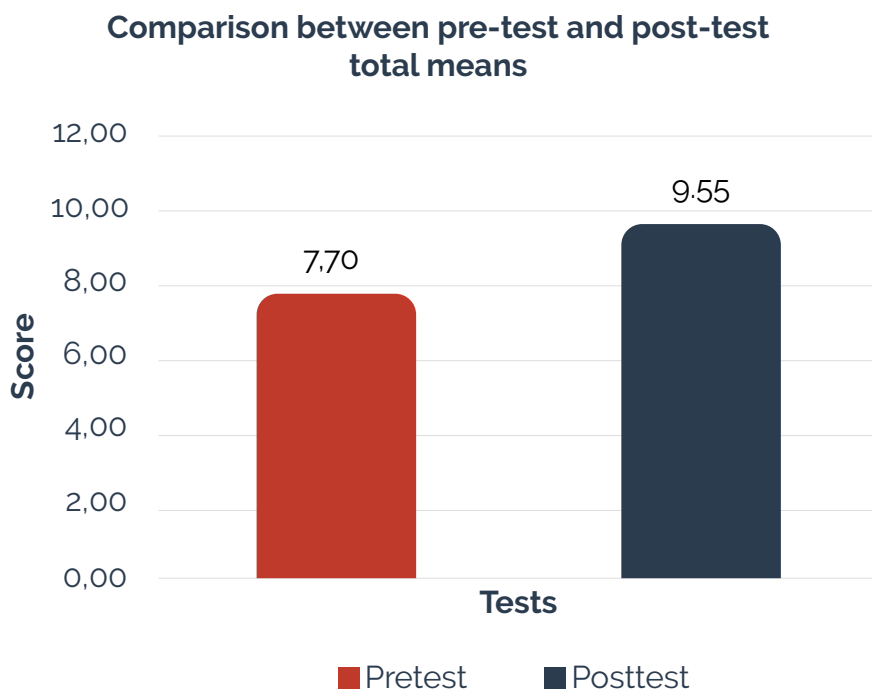
The present bar graph compares the total mean score obtained by the seventh-grade students during the pre-test and post-test in order to show the impact of authentic materials on the improvement of participants' listening comprehension sub-skills such as "listening for predicting", "listening for gist", "listening for specific information", "listening for understanding vocabulary" and "listening for sequencing".

Based on the above results, it can be seen that 100 % of the students got a total mean score of 7,70 out of 10 in the pre-test, which placed them in the satisfactory qualitative rating scale according to the Ministry of Education, whereas the overall post-test mean was 9,55 out of 10, allowing them to move up in the highly satisfactory

rating scale. Undeniably, this data demonstrated the importance of applying different authentic materials such as conversations, TED talks, songs, cartoons, and documentaries to develop the students' listening comprehension sub-skills since these provided them with a meaningful teaching-learning process within the classroom.

5. Discussion

What is the level of improvement in English listening comprehension sub-skills when using authentic materials through technology among seventh-grade students at an elementary school in Loja city?

In this study, the seventh-grade students achieved a total improvement of 1.85 points in their listening comprehension after the treatment with authentic materials. That is to say, their mean score on the post-test increased in comparison to their pre-test. In that sense, at the end of the intervention, this group of young learners was able to accurately predict what the English material was about by just watching and listening to the teacher's prompts, as well as, they recognized the general idea and identified the requested information on audio and videotapes. Finally, the students also boosted their English vocabulary and rehearsed their listening for sequence sub-skill. These results are attributed to the use of authentic materials since they introduced the learners to real-world issues in which the target language was being used. This somehow caught students' interest in the English language because they could see that the words they were going to learn were useful to keep the conversation in spontaneous situations, which kept them concentrated while listening.

Considering the aforementioned information, these results corroborate the fact that authentic materials can be used as such a source to enhance listening skills as stated by Mojgan and Tollabi (2019). Moreover, according to Saputri et al. (2019), students can find authentic materials interesting which enables them to master their skills of main idea gathering and event sequencing, just as the participants of this study did. Finally, as noted by Akazhanova (2021) authentic materials facilitate the development of word recognition during listening since students get exposed to several speech

dialects which demand them to concentrate even more in order to identify the words. This can explain why the learners of this study enhanced their sub-skills of listening for understanding vocabulary and specific information, since the authentic materials introduced depicted various real-life scenarios with characters of numerous cultural backgrounds who each pronounced the words differently.

This study was subject to some limitations that can be addressed in future research. The first was related to the unexpected situations that occurred in the classroom which did not allow the students to successfully complete their listening comprehension exercises and the second was the lack of authentic materials according to listeners' level and age since most of them were structured with advanced grammar and vocabulary.

6. Conclusions

Based on the results gathered, it can be concluded that 1) The use of authentic materials through technology allowed the participants of this study to significantly improve their listening comprehension sub-skills in terms of listening for predicting, listening for gist, listening for specific information, listening for understanding vocabulary, and listening for sequencing. 2) Authentic materials can be a great source of motivation for students in English language learning and help them to keep focused on listening. 3) Through the use of technology, authentic materials help to recreate numerous settings, which can be found significantly interesting for learners, where the target language is used naturally in the form of animated videos, educational stories, and genuine audiotapes allocated in different web sources. For these reasons, the conduction of further research that studies the effects of authentic materials on other language skills, in bigger samples, longer time lapses, and different educational levels is totally recommended. This will help to understand more the scope of this variable on English language learning.

7. References

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