



USING SHORT AUTHENTIC AUDIO CLIPS TO ENHANCE LISTENING SKILLS OF A2 EFL LEARNERS

Abduhalilova Shahzoda

Student of the Foreign Language and Literature Program
Namangan State Institute of Foreign Languages named after Ibrat
Scientific supervisor: Khoshimova Diyora Azamjon qizi

Abstract. This article explores how short authentic audio clips can improve the listening skills of A2-level EFL learners. The paper is grounded in exploratory action research and further enriched by survey evidence collected through a mobile questionnaire. The study shows that many learners find listening without subtitles difficult, while a considerable proportion report that short authentic audio clips help them understand new words and phrases. Based on the findings, the article proposes a staged classroom model involving pre-listening scaffolding, purpose-driven listening, transcript-based noticing, and post-listening speaking tasks. The paper argues that authentic audio, when short and well-selected, reduces anxiety, increases exposure to natural speech, and supports vocabulary growth, strategic listening, and communicative confidence.

Keywords: A2 level, EFL, listening comprehension, authentic audio, short clips, exploratory action research, subtitles, vocabulary learning, communicative competence.

Annotatsiya: Mazkur maqolada A2 darajadagi EFL o'quvchilarining tinglab tushunish ko'nikmalarini rivojlantirishda qisqa autentik audio lavhalardan foydalanish masalasi ko'rib chiqiladi. Maqola exploratory action research yondashuviga tayangan holda yozilgan bo'lib, mobil so'rovnoma natijalari bilan boyitildi. Tahlillar ko'pchilik o'quvchilar subtitrsiz tinglashni qiyin deb baholashini, biroq qisqa autentik audio kliplar yangi so'z va iboralarni tushunishga amaliy yordam berishini ko'rsatdi. Shunga tayangan holda tinglashdan oldingi tayyorgarlik, bosqichma-bosqich tinglash, transkriptdan ongli foydalanish va tinglashdan keyingi muloqot vazifalariga asoslangan metodik model taklif etiladi.

INTRODUCTION.

In modern language education, listening is not merely an auxiliary skill; it is a core component of communicative competence. Learners meet spoken language before they can confidently produce it, and in many classrooms listening becomes the gateway to speaking, vocabulary growth, and pronunciation awareness. In Uzbekistan, this issue is especially relevant because educational policy increasingly emphasizes practical language competence, mobility, and access to international communication.





The legal and policy context also supports innovation in language teaching. The Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan “On Education”, Presidential Resolution PQ-5117 on raising foreign language education to a qualitatively new stage, and the “Uzbekistan – 2030” Strategy all highlight the importance of quality education and modern teaching methods. These priorities create a strong foundation for classroom practices that move beyond textbook-only instruction and bring learners closer to authentic language use.

Among A2 learners, listening is often perceived as one of the most difficult skills. Learners may understand written words but fail to recognize them in natural speech. They may also become dependent on subtitles or written transcripts, which can limit their development of independent listening ability. This article therefore examines how short authentic audio clips can be used as a manageable bridge between classroom English and real-life spoken communication.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL BACKGROUND.

Research on authentic materials suggests that carefully selected real-life language input can increase learner motivation and expose students to natural pronunciation, rhythm, and communicative patterns. Harmer emphasizes that listening lessons should develop strategies rather than simply test comprehension. Goh and Vandergrift likewise point out that effective listening instruction includes metacognitive support, such as prediction, selective attention, and reflection.

For A2-level learners, the key is not to provide long or cognitively demanding recordings, but short, topic-based clips related to everyday communication: buying tickets, asking for directions, leaving a voice message, ordering food, or listening to a basic announcement. When such clips are combined with clear tasks, learners begin to tolerate ambiguity, listen for gist, and identify useful details rather than attempting to decode every single word.

Authenticity alone, however, does not guarantee success. A difficult recording without scaffolding may only increase anxiety. Therefore, the pedagogical value of authentic audio depends on task design, teacher mediation, and repeated exposure. This article follows that principle and combines theory with small-scale evidence from learner responses.

METHODOLOGY

The article follows the logic of exploratory action research. In this approach, the teacher begins by exploring a classroom problem, plans a limited pedagogical intervention, implements it in real teaching conditions, and reflects on the results. This method is particularly suitable for language teachers because it is practical, context-sensitive, and closely connected with everyday instructional improvement.





The survey-based evidence used to enrich the article comes from a mobile questionnaire linked with the classroom investigation. The summary view shows 17 total responses and a 100% completion rate. Two questionnaire items are especially useful for the present discussion: the first concerns the perceived difficulty of listening without subtitles, and the second concerns how often short authentic audio clips help learners understand new words or phrases. One of the screenshots displays 12 valid responses for the subtitle-related item, while the vocabulary-support item contains 17 responses.

Although the survey is small-scale, it provides meaningful descriptive evidence that complements classroom observation. It helps move the discussion from purely theoretical claims to learner-informed interpretation. The combination of observation, reflection, and questionnaire data is appropriate for a practical classroom-oriented article.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The first notable result concerns subtitle dependence. As Figure 1 demonstrates, two-thirds of the respondents evaluated listening without subtitles as either “very difficult” or “difficult”. Only a small proportion described the experience as easy, and none selected the “very easy” option. This indicates that many learners still rely on visual textual support when processing spoken English.

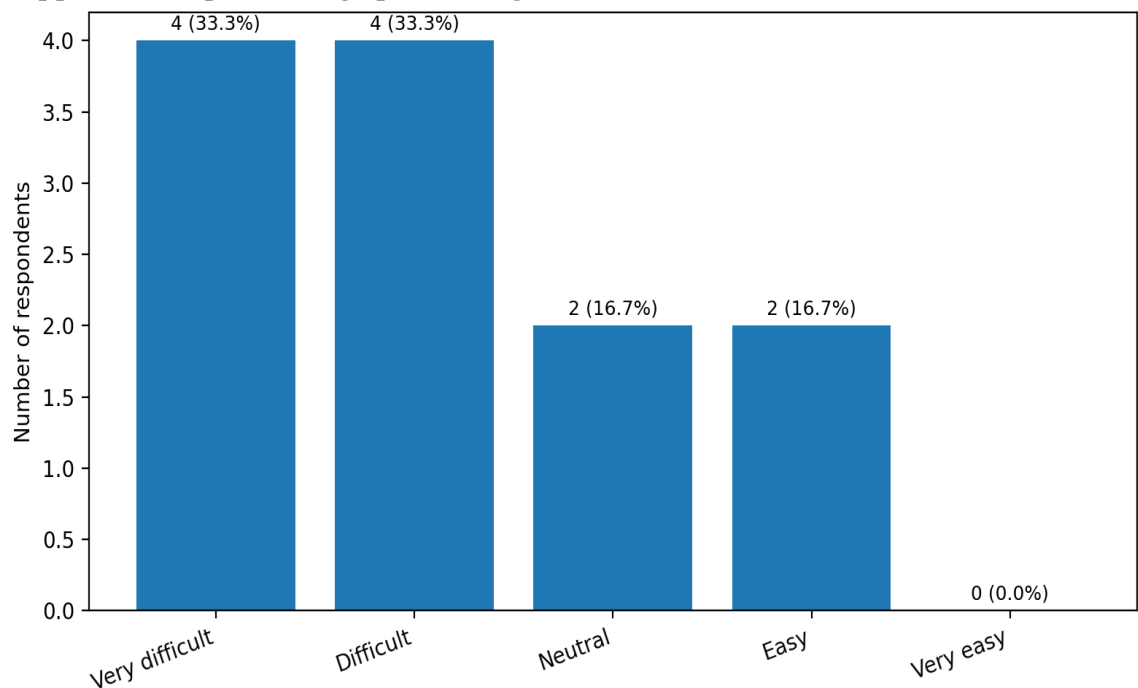


Figure 1. Difficulty of listening without subtitles (n = 12)

The same tendency becomes more visible in the distribution chart below. The clustering of responses in the higher-difficulty categories suggests that learners are not only challenged by language itself, but by the transient nature of speech: unlike reading,



listening does not allow easy return to the missed sentence. This result strengthens the argument for regular exposure to short, manageable authentic listening tasks.

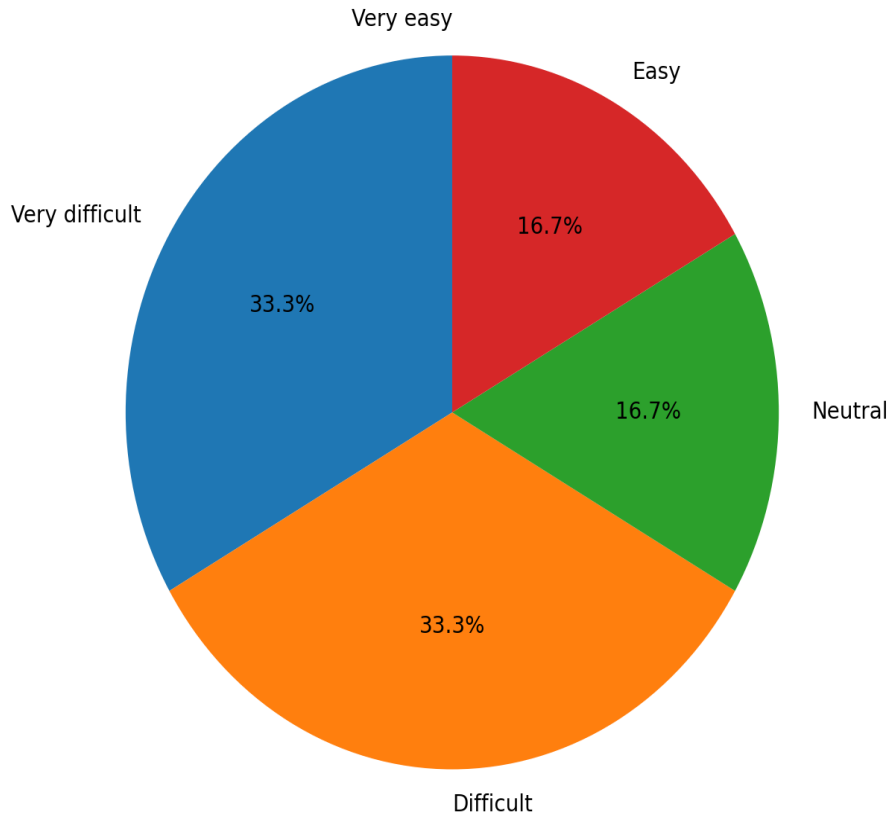


Figure 2. Distribution of subtitle-free listening difficulty

Table 1.

Responses on listening without subtitles

Response option	Frequency	Percentage
Very difficult	4	33.33%
Difficult	4	33.33%
Neutral	2	16.67%
Easy	2	16.67%
Very easy	0	0.00%

The second survey item provides a more positive picture. Figure 3 shows that many learners view short authentic audio clips as helpful for understanding new words or phrases. The modal response is “sometimes” (47.06%), followed by “rarely” (23.53%) and “always” (17.65%). Although “often” was not selected, the combined pattern still suggests that authentic clips contribute to vocabulary noticing and contextual word learning.



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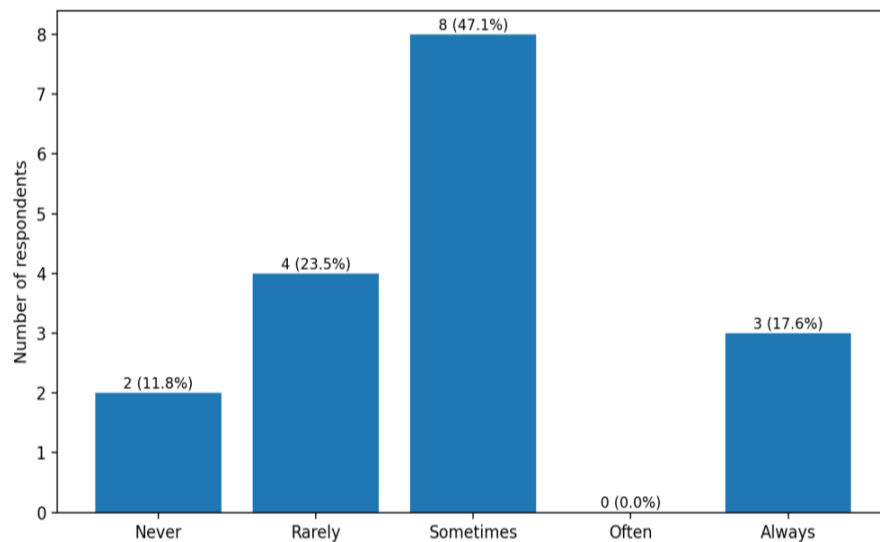


Figure 3. How often short authentic audio clips help with new words/phrases ($n = 17$)

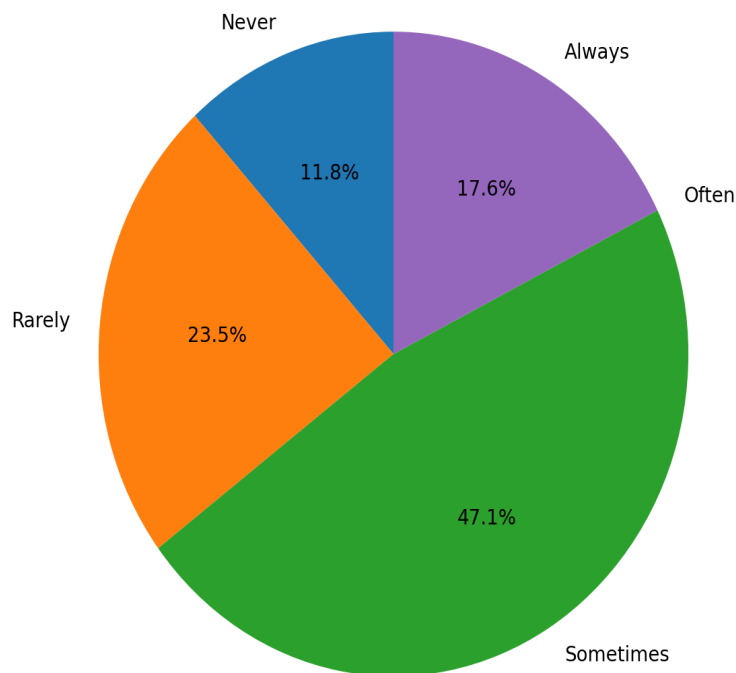


Figure 4. Distribution of vocabulary-support responses

Table 2.

Responses on vocabulary support from authentic clips

Response option	Frequency	Percentage
Never	2	11.76%
Rarely	4	23.53%





Sometimes	8	47.06%
Often	0	0.00%
Always	3	17.65%

Taken together, the two findings support an important pedagogical interpretation. Learners experience difficulty when listening support is removed, yet they also recognize the value of short authentic audio clips for language growth. This means that authentic listening tasks should not be postponed until learners become “ready”; rather, they should be introduced gradually, with scaffolding, repetition, and clear listening purposes. In other words, difficulty is not evidence against authentic audio—it is evidence for better-structured authentic audio instruction. Based on the theoretical discussion and survey findings, a staged classroom model is recommended. The model begins with pre-listening support, moves through two purposeful listening stages, and ends with post-listening communication. This sequence helps learners reduce anxiety, focus attention, and transfer what they hear into productive use.

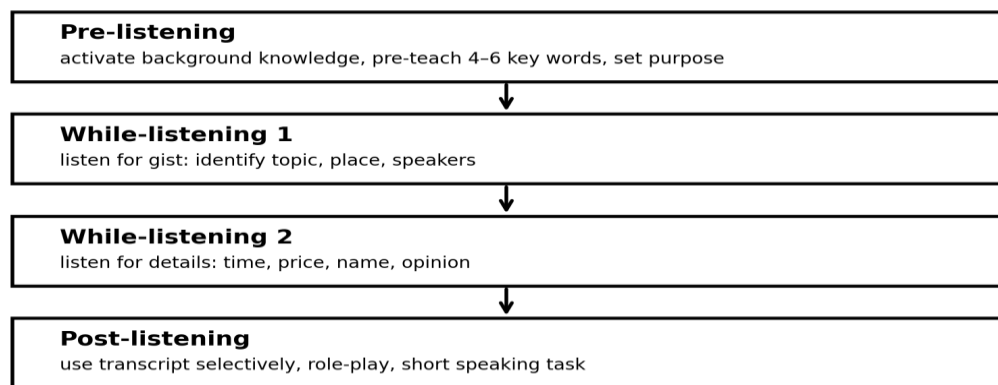


Figure 6. Classroom model for integrating short authentic audio clips

Figure 5. Classroom model for using short authentic audio clips

The broader research logic can also be represented as an exploratory action research cycle. The teacher first explores classroom difficulties, plans targeted intervention, applies the intervention, and reflects on the evidence. This cycle is flexible and allows continuous refinement of listening instruction.

Practical Implications

1. Teachers should select clips that are short (approximately 30 seconds to 2 minutes), familiar in topic, and limited in unknown vocabulary.
2. Pre-listening tasks should activate schema through pictures, questions, or a small amount of vocabulary prediction rather than long explanation.
3. The first listening should focus on gist, the second on specific information, and a later listening may focus on noticing pronunciation or useful expressions.



4. Transcripts should ideally be used after learners have attempted to listen, so that the written text becomes a noticing tool rather than a replacement for listening.

5. Post-listening tasks should connect input with communication. Role-plays, short dialogues, or message-recording tasks help transform listening into speaking practice.

6. Teachers should also encourage brief reflection: learners can write what helped them, what was difficult, and which strategy they want to try next time.

CONCLUSION

The enriched analysis confirms that short authentic audio clips are a promising tool for developing A2 learners' listening ability. Learners still find listening without subtitles challenging, which highlights the need for structured support and gradual training. At the same time, many respondents acknowledge that short authentic clips help them understand new words and phrases, suggesting that such materials contribute not only to listening comprehension but also to vocabulary growth.

From a methodological point of view, exploratory action research provides a practical framework for integrating classroom observation and learner feedback. The findings do not claim universal generalization; however, they offer strong pedagogical value for teachers who aim to build more realistic, less textbook-bound listening lessons. If implemented systematically, short authentic audio clips can make the classroom more communicative, more confidence-building, and closer to real language use.

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