



## Authentic Materials in EFL Learning: Examining Their Effects on Students' Intrinsic Motivation and Listening Skills

Nurul Husnawati<sup>1\*</sup>, Audy Yundayani<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Sekolah Tinggi Ilmu Al-Quran, Kepulauan Riau, Indonesia

<sup>2</sup>STKIP Kusuma Negara, Indonesia

email: [rasyidahnadzira5@gmail.com](mailto:rasyidahnadzira5@gmail.com)

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### ABSTRACT

This study examines the effects of integrating authentic materials into instructional practices on students' intrinsic motivation and listening skills. A mixed-method research design was employed, combining quantitative and qualitative approaches to provide a comprehensive analysis. The participants consisted of 70 junior high school students from an Islamic private school in Batam, with 30 students selected purposively for detailed investigation. Quantitative data were collected through structured instruments measuring motivation and listening performance, while qualitative data explored students' perceptions and experiences. The findings reveal that the use of authentic materials significantly enhances students' intrinsic motivation and improves their listening skills. Authentic materials provide meaningful and contextually relevant input, which encourages active student engagement in the learning process. This increased engagement contributes to both motivational and cognitive development. Therefore, integrating authentic materials into the curriculum can be considered an effective strategy for improving student motivation and strengthening listening competencies in English language learning contexts

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

English has become a global lingua franca, functioning as a primary medium of communication across international domains such as education, science, technology, and diplomacy. Its global significance has led to its widespread use in educational contexts, particularly in higher education, where English proficiency is often a prerequisite for academic success. Mastery of English enables learners to access global knowledge, participate in international academic communities, and pursue educational opportunities abroad. Communicative competence in English encompasses not

only linguistic knowledge but also sociolinguistic, discourse, and strategic competencies, all of which are essential for effective communication (Savignon, 2021)

In Indonesia, English is taught as a foreign language, and its use in everyday communication remains limited. This limited exposure presents significant challenges for learners, particularly in developing listening and pronunciation skills. Students often struggle to recognize and produce accurate English sounds due to differences between the phonological systems of English and Bahasa Indonesia, as well as insufficient exposure to authentic spoken input (Indrayadi et al., 2021; Saadah & Ardi, 2020). Additionally, the use of less effective instructional methods and limited access to meaningful language input further hinder students' language development (Putri & Rosa, 2020).

Listening plays a fundamental role in language acquisition, as it serves as the primary source of linguistic input and provides the foundation for the development of other language skills, including speaking and pronunciation. Research suggests that a significant portion of language learning occurs through listening, highlighting its importance in the learning process (Palmer, 2014). However, in many classroom settings, listening instruction relies heavily on textbook-based materials that lack authenticity and fail to represent real-life language use. As a result, students often experience difficulties in comprehending spoken English in natural contexts, which negatively impacts their listening proficiency and overall communicative competence (Goh & Vandergrift, 2021).

These challenges are also evident in the context of this study, where students demonstrate low levels of motivation and limited interest in learning English. The instructional materials used are often perceived as irrelevant and unengaging, as they do not reflect real-life communication or incorporate current and meaningful topics. Consequently, students tend to engage in learning activities merely as an obligation rather than with genuine interest. Furthermore, students encounter difficulties in understanding spoken language and responding appropriately, indicating a need for more effective instructional strategies that can enhance both their motivation and listening abilities.

One potential approach to addressing these issues is the integration of authentic materials into language instruction. Authentic materials, such as songs, videos, and real-life conversations, expose learners to language as it is naturally used in real-world contexts. These materials provide meaningful and contextualized input, enabling students to better understand how language is used in everyday communication (POLAT & ERİŞTİ, 2022). In addition, authentic materials offer models of natural pronunciation, including stress, rhythm, and intonation, which can support the development of students' listening and pronunciation skills (Kara, 2023)

Beyond their linguistic benefits, authentic materials also play a significant role in enhancing students' motivation. Motivation is widely recognized as a key factor in successful language learning, with intrinsic motivation being particularly important due to its association with sustained engagement and deeper learning (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Authentic materials can stimulate intrinsic motivation by making learning more relevant, enjoyable, and meaningful. When students perceive that the language they are learning has real-life applications, they are more likely to engage actively in the learning process (Guo, 2012; Singh et al., 2023).

Despite the recognized benefits of authentic materials, their integration into listening instruction remains limited in some educational contexts. Many teachers continue to rely on simplified or artificial materials that may not adequately prepare students for real-world communication (Azarnoosh, 2016). This gap highlights the need for further investigation into the effectiveness of authentic materials in enhancing students' motivation and listening skills.

In response to these issues, the present study aims to examine the extent to which the use of authentic materials influences students' intrinsic motivation and listening skills in an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) context. Additionally, the study seeks to explore students' perspectives on

the use of authentic materials in listening activities, as their insights can provide valuable information regarding the effectiveness and practicality of this instructional approach. By addressing these objectives, the study attempts to respond to the existing challenges related to low student motivation, limited engagement, and difficulties in listening comprehension.

The findings of this study are expected to contribute to both theoretical and practical domains. Theoretically, the study provides empirical evidence regarding the role of authentic materials in supporting language learning, particularly in relation to motivation and listening comprehension. Practically, it offers guidance for educators in designing and implementing more effective and engaging instructional materials that incorporate authentic resources. Ultimately, this study seeks to support the development of more meaningful language learning experiences and to enhance students' overall proficiency in English within EFL contexts.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

Research is fundamentally grounded in theoretical frameworks that guide the direction and coherence of the study. These frameworks are derived from a range of scholarly sources, including peer-reviewed journal articles, academic books, and conference proceedings, collectively forming the body of literature. A literature review not only synthesizes existing knowledge but also critically evaluates previous and current studies to establish the relevance and necessity of the research (Creswell, 2019).

Within the context of this study, a mixed-method approach is employed, in which the literature review plays a pivotal role in shaping the research design. It informs the formulation of research questions and hypotheses while simultaneously justifying the significance of the study. Moreover, the literature is revisited during the interpretation stage to critically compare empirical findings with established theoretical assumptions (Creswell, 2019).

This study also conceptualizes several key constructs. English language teaching is examined in terms of teachers' roles and contextual challenges. Communicative language teaching is explored as a framework emphasizing meaningful interaction and pedagogical strategies. Listening skills are discussed as complex processes requiring appropriate instructional techniques and material design. Intrinsic motivation is critically considered as a key factor influencing learning engagement, while authentic materials are analyzed in terms of their pedagogical value, types, and relevance to real-world language use.

### **2.1 English Language Teaching**

English teachers play a vital role in facilitating effective language learning by guiding and motivating students to develop key communication skills, including listening, speaking, reading, and writing (Littlewood, 1981). These skills are essential for supporting students' academic and future career opportunities. To enhance motivation, teachers need to implement strategies that respond to learners' interests and needs, while also considering students' perspectives to improve engagement (Dunn & Zimmer, 2020; Kotorowicz-Jasińska, 2020). However, in EFL contexts such as Indonesia, limited exposure to authentic English outside the classroom presents a significant challenge (Bailey, 2020).

To address this issue, promoting learner autonomy through student-centered approaches can increase engagement and motivation (Brown, 2014). Additionally, effective instruction requires careful selection and integration of materials. Resources, such as online media, only become meaningful instructional tools when aligned with learners' psychological and pedagogical needs,

thereby enhancing motivation and supporting more effective learning experiences (Mishan & Timmis, 2015).

## 2.2 Communicative Language Teaching

Language serves as the primary medium for human communication, and effective language learning emphasizes the development of communicative competence rather than mere grammatical knowledge (Hymes, 1974, as cited in Hathaway & Nevins, 2024; Savignon, 2021). Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) promotes meaningful interaction and the use of authentic input to prepare learners for real-life communication (Bailey, 2020). However, in EFL contexts, limited exposure to authentic language outside the classroom often constrains the effectiveness of CLT (Goh & Vandergrift, 2021). While authentic materials are considered valuable for enhancing engagement and bridging classroom learning with real-world use, their linguistic complexity may hinder comprehension if not carefully adapted (Bailey, 2020). Moreover, the success of CLT depends on balancing interaction, feedback, and affective factors such as motivation and anxiety (Arnold & Brown, 1999). These limitations highlight the need for further investigation into how authentic materials can effectively support both motivation and listening development.

## 2.3. Teaching Listening

Listening is a multifaceted skill involving several interrelated processes, including receiving, interpreting, interacting, and reflecting on spoken language (Rost, 2002, as cited in Kotorowicz-Jasińska, 2020; Rost, 2016). It extends beyond simple comprehension to include the ability to infer meaning, negotiate understanding, and apply knowledge critically. Effective listening instruction therefore requires the integration of both bottom-up processing, which focuses on linguistic elements, and top-down processing, which draws on prior knowledge and context (Nation & Newton, 2009; Goh & Vandergrift, 2021). However, in practice, teaching often emphasizes lower-level decoding skills, limiting students' ability to engage with authentic spoken language.

The quality and appropriateness of input also play a crucial role. According to Krashen (2015), input must be comprehensible yet slightly challenging to promote acquisition. While authentic materials provide exposure to real-world language, their complexity may hinder understanding without proper scaffolding (Bailey, 2020). Additionally, affective factors such as motivation and anxiety significantly influence listening performance, highlighting the need for supportive learning environments (Azarnoosh, 2016). These considerations underscore the importance of balanced, context-sensitive listening instruction.



Figure 1. The Stages of Teaching Listening

## 2.4 Listening Skills

Listening is a fundamental component of language learning, serving as the foundation for the development of other language skills (Bailey, 2020). It involves not only the reception of spoken input but also the integration of bottom-up processes, such as decoding linguistic elements, and top-down processes, which draw on prior knowledge and contextual understanding (Kotorowicz-Jasińska, 2020; Azarnoosh, 2016). Despite its importance, listening is often treated as a passive skill, which may limit students' ability to engage actively with spoken language.

Effective listening requires the use of both cognitive and metacognitive strategies, including processing information, monitoring comprehension, and evaluating understanding (Goh & Vandergrift, 2021). However, many learners face difficulties due to limited awareness of these strategies and insufficient exposure to meaningful input. Moreover, challenges in interpreting implied meanings highlight the importance of pragmatic knowledge in listening comprehension.

These limitations suggest that listening instruction should go beyond comprehension tasks and incorporate strategy training and authentic materials. Such an approach can enhance students' engagement, improve comprehension, and support the development of more effective and confident language users.

## 2.5 Intrinsic Motivation

Motivation is widely recognized as a key factor influencing success in language learning, as it shapes learners' effort, persistence, and engagement (Dörnyei, 1998, as cited in Mishan & Timmis, 2015). Within this framework, intrinsic motivation—driven by internal interest and enjoyment—is often considered more sustainable than extrinsic motivation, which relies on external rewards or pressures (Ryan & Deci, 2000; Dunn & Zimmer, 2020; Deci et al., 2017). Intrinsically motivated learners tend to demonstrate greater persistence, creativity, and deeper engagement with learning tasks (Brown, 2014).

However, the assumption that intrinsic motivation is inherently superior requires critical consideration, as its development depends heavily on contextual factors such as task design, learner autonomy, and classroom environment. Self-determination theory highlights autonomy, competence, and relatedness as essential components for fostering intrinsic motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2000). In practice, achieving these conditions can be challenging, particularly in structured educational settings.

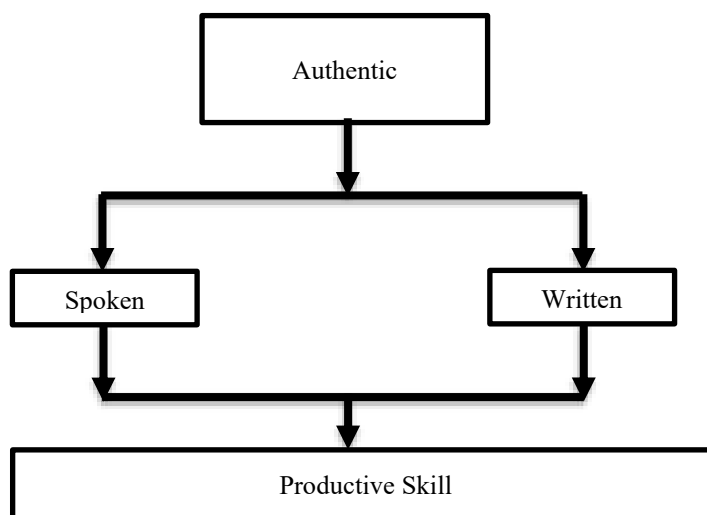
The integration of authentic materials has been identified as a potential strategy for enhancing intrinsic motivation by providing meaningful and relevant learning experiences (Azarnoosh, 2016). Nevertheless, their effectiveness depends on careful selection and alignment with learners' needs, suggesting that motivation is not solely determined by materials but by their pedagogical implementation.

## 2.6 Authentic Materials

Instructional materials play a central role in language learning, as they provide essential input and opportunities for practice, thereby supporting effective and efficient teaching processes (Mishan & Timmis, 2015; Tomlinson, 2012). These materials include a wide range of resources, such as textbooks, multimedia content, and digital platforms, which contribute to the development of language skills (Richards, 2021; Goh & Vandergrift, 2021). Their effectiveness, however, depends on careful selection, including considerations of relevance, authenticity, accessibility, and their ability to promote meaningful communication (Azarnoosh, 2016).

Authentic materials, defined as resources created for real-life communication rather than pedagogical purposes, are often valued for exposing learners to natural language use (Savignon, 2021). While technology has expanded access to such materials, their effectiveness is not guaranteed. The linguistic complexity and cultural specificity of authentic materials may pose challenges for learners if not appropriately adapted (McDonough, 2013).

Therefore, teachers play a critical role as materials developers, responsible for selecting, adapting, and integrating resources to meet learners' needs. This highlights that the pedagogical value of materials lies not in their authenticity alone but in their effective implementation.



**Figure 2.** Authentic Materials

Authentic Listening Materials (ALM) expose learners to real-world language, enhancing listening, speaking, and motivation. Materials such as songs provide meaningful, engaging input and support pronunciation and comprehension. However, their complexity, non-standard language, and acoustic challenges require careful selection and instructional support to ensure effectiveness in developing students' listening skills.

### 3. METHOD

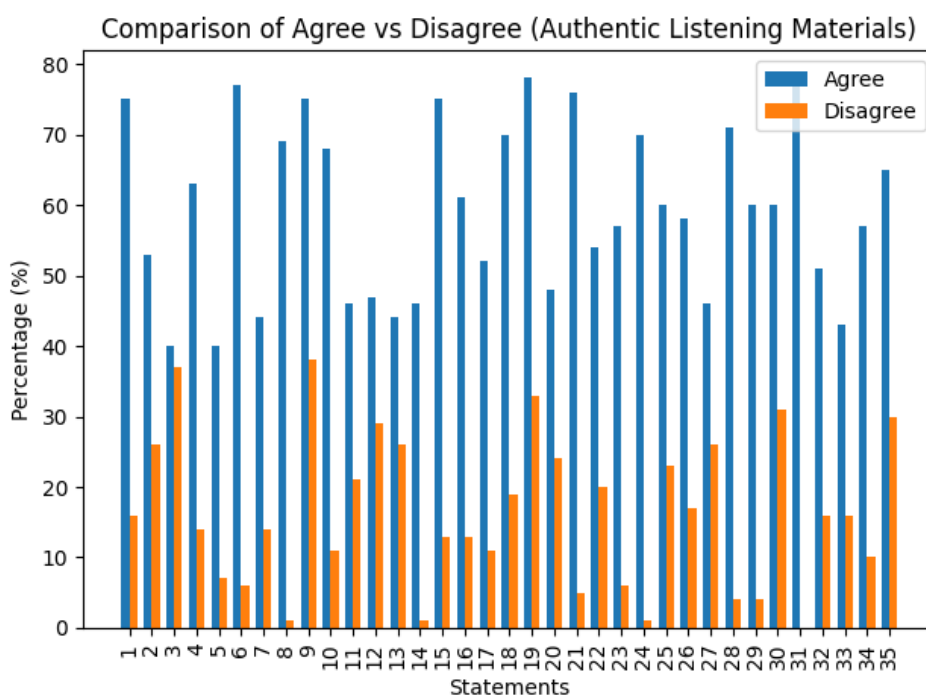
This chapter outlines the research methodology, including research design, participants, instruments, data collection, and analysis procedures. The study employed a mixed-method approach, combining quantitative and qualitative data to provide a comprehensive understanding of the research problem (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). A sequential explanatory design was used, where quantitative data were collected and analyzed first, followed by qualitative data to further explain the results (Creswell, 2019).

The study involved ninth-grade students from an Islamic junior high school in Batam. From the population, a purposive sample was selected to represent varying levels of student ability. Data were collected using the Cambridge Starters Listening Placement Test, questionnaires, and interviews. The listening test was administered as both a pre-test and post-test to measure students' listening improvement. By integrating both data types, the study aimed to provide a more in-depth and reliable analysis of the effects of authentic materials on students' intrinsic motivation and listening skills.

#### 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Authentic materials play an important role in language learning, particularly in enhancing listening skills and students' intrinsic motivation. At SMP Qur'an Centre, low student motivation was found to negatively affect listening performance. To address this issue, this study investigates the impact of authentic listening materials on students' motivation and listening skills within this educational context. The research specifically focuses on how the use of authentic materials influences students' engagement and listening development in an environment that integrates both religious and general education.

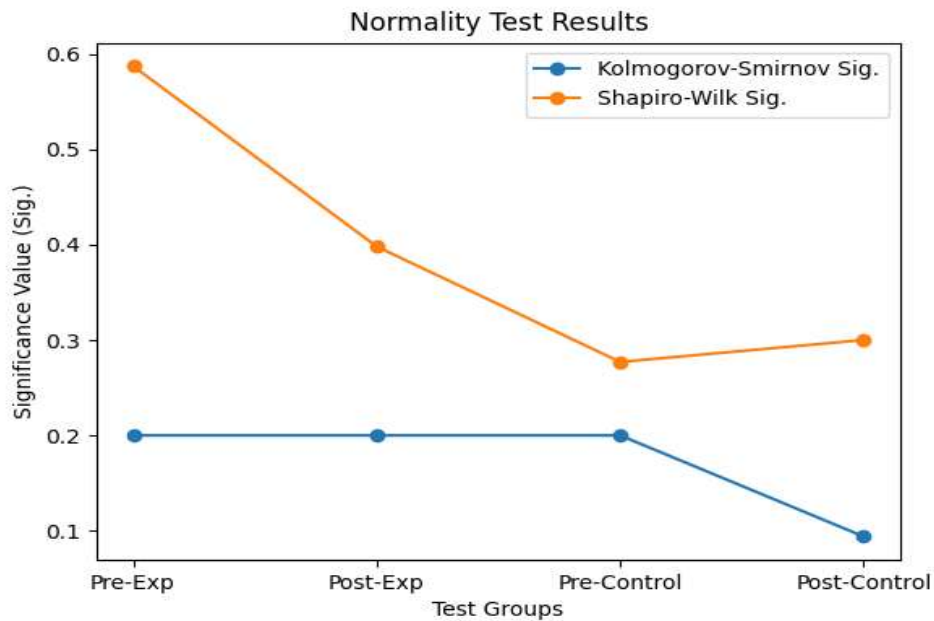
The figure below displays the percentage of analysis results for each survey statement.



**Figure 3.** The Percentage Analysis of Each Statement and Number of Students

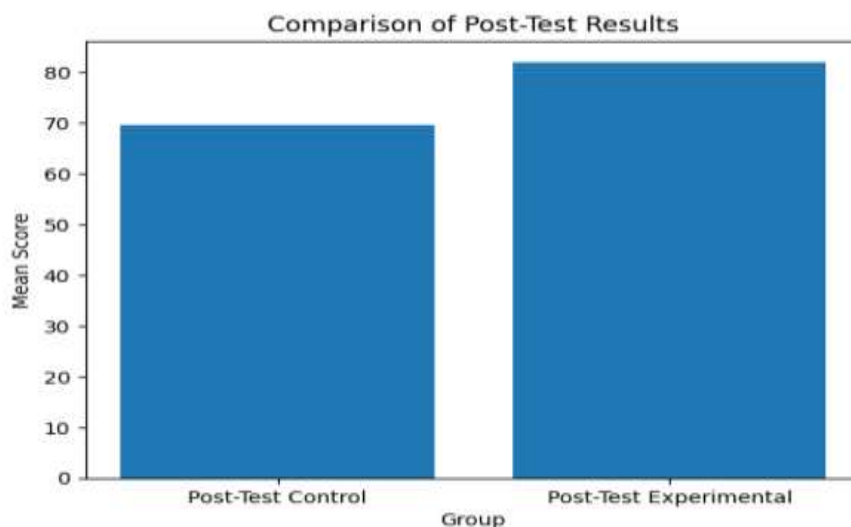
The findings show that students in the experimental group demonstrated higher intrinsic motivation after using authentic listening materials (ALM). They showed increased engagement, satisfaction, confidence, and willingness to participate. Improvements were reflected in autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Overall, ALM positively enhanced students' motivation and provided useful insights for more effective lesson design.

The data analysis using SPSS 20 included tests of normality, an independent sample t-test, and an N-gain test. The Shapiro-Wilk test was used to assess the normality of pretest and post-test scores, as the sample size was fewer than 30. The null hypothesis stated that the data were normally distributed, while the alternative indicated otherwise. A p-value greater than 0.05 signified normal distribution, allowing the use of parametric tests. Conversely, a p-value below 0.05 indicated non-normal data, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis.



**Figure 4.** Normality Test Results

The normality test results showed that all p-values for both experimental and control groups in the pretest and post-test were above 0.05, indicating that the data were normally distributed. This confirmed the suitability of using parametric statistical tests for further analysis. The normal distribution enhanced the reliability and validity of the quantitative findings, allowing accurate evaluation of the impact of authentic listening materials (ALM). Consequently, the researcher was able to apply parametric tests to examine the effects of ALM on students' intrinsic motivation and listening skills with greater confidence.



**Figure 5.** Group Statistic

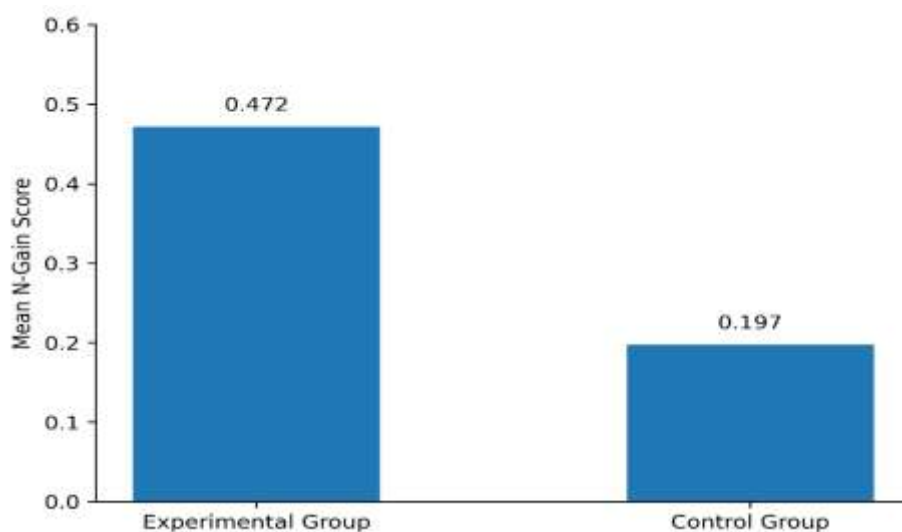
The group statistics showed a clear difference in post-test mean scores between the control group (68.67) and the experimental group (82.00), indicating improved listening skills after using

authentic listening materials (ALM). The relatively low standard deviations suggested consistent performance within both groups. While these results highlight a positive trend, the Independent Samples T-test was necessary to determine whether the difference was statistically significant. Overall, the descriptive findings suggest that ALM had a beneficial effect on students' listening skills, which was further examined through inferential analysis.

**Tabel 1.** Independent Sample T-test of the Research

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means							
	F	Sig.	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		
								Lower	Upper	
Results	Equal variances assumed	.413	.526	-2.973	28	.006	-12.333	4.148	-20.830	-3.836
	Equal variances not assumed			-2.973	27.078	.006	-12.333	4.148	-20.843	-3.823

The independent samples t-test results showed that the data were homogeneous (Levene's Sig. = 0.526 > 0.05), allowing interpretation under equal variance assumed. The Sig. (2-tailed) value of 0.006 (< 0.05) indicated a statistically significant difference between the groups, leading to the acceptance of H1. The mean difference of -12.33 reflected a substantial improvement in the experimental group's listening scores after the treatment. This finding confirms that the use of authentic listening materials (ALM) had a significant positive effect on students' listening skills, demonstrating both statistical significance and practical effectiveness in enhancing learning outcomes.



**Figure 6.** N-gain calculation

The N-gain results showed that the experimental group achieved a mean score of 0.472 categorized as medium improvement, while the control group obtained 0.197 indicating low improvement. This difference demonstrates that students exposed to authentic listening materials experienced greater progress. The larger mean gain in the experimental group further confirms the positive impact of the treatment. Overall, these findings suggest that integrating authentic listening materials is an effective approach to improving students' listening skills and can support more meaningful learning outcomes.

The researcher collected qualitative data through interviews to explore students' perceptions of authentic listening materials (ALM). The analysis showed that ALM increased students' engagement, curiosity, and enjoyment. One student stated, *"I feel very engaged... listening becomes my favourite activity, especially with songs and videos with subtitles."* This indicates that ALM made learning more meaningful and easier to understand.

Another student shared, *"I feel curious and excited... now I really enjoy working on assignments,"* reflecting a shift from obligation to intrinsic motivation. Students also reported improved listening skills. As one noted, *"Authentic materials help me understand daily language, improve pronunciation, and expand vocabulary."*

However, challenges were also identified. A student mentioned, *"It is difficult when the speaker talks too fast or uses unfamiliar phrases,"* although this encouraged further learning. Overall, the findings show that ALM positively enhanced students' intrinsic motivation and listening skills, consistent with quantitative results.

The findings indicate that the integration of authentic listening materials (ALM) significantly enhances students' intrinsic motivation and listening skills. Intrinsic motivation—reflected in engagement, curiosity, satisfaction, and persistence—is a key factor in successful language learning (L-Hoorie & MacIntyre, 2020; Ryan & Deci, 2000). The use of authentic materials, particularly songs, creates meaningful and enjoyable learning experiences connected to real-life contexts, thereby increasing students' willingness to participate (Mishan & Timmis, 2015; Bailey, 2020).

Both quantitative and qualitative findings consistently support these outcomes, showing improved confidence, participation, and persistence. However, challenges such as fast speech and complex language may hinder comprehension if materials are not carefully selected (Adara, 2020; Mardhiyya, 2022).

In terms of listening skills, the results demonstrate significant improvement in students' ability to comprehend, interpret, and respond to spoken language (Goh & Vandergrift, 2021; Rost, 2016). Furthermore, students reported positive perceptions of ALM, highlighting increased enjoyment, interaction, and collaboration (Amala, 2019; Rahayu & Rifansyah, 2022). Overall, ALM contributes to a more engaging and effective language learning environment.

## 5. CONCLUSION

The findings of this study demonstrate that the integration of authentic listening materials (ALM) has a significant positive impact on students' listening skills and intrinsic motivation. Quantitative analyses, including the N-gain and independent sample t-test, revealed greater improvement in the experimental group compared to the control group, confirming the effectiveness of the treatment. Additionally, questionnaire results indicated higher levels of engagement, interest, and confidence among students. These findings were further supported by qualitative data, as most students reported increased motivation, persistence, and satisfaction during learning activities. Overall, the consistency between quantitative and qualitative results highlights that ALM is an effective pedagogical approach, contributing to improved listening performance and fostering more meaningful and engaging language learning experiences.

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