Motivational Impact of Authentic Listening-Viewing Materials on ESL Students' Critical Thinking Skills Development

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1 Introduction

Since the introduction of the Law on the application of English as one of the international communication languages in Ukraine in June 2024, the significance of English has risen. The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFRL) determines four types of language skills that a person learning English ought to master. Among those, there are receptive listening skills. Gilakjani (2016) states that listening proficiency is essential, as the key aspect of learning a language is receiving language input. Yildirim and Yildirim (2016) point out that listening plays a significant role in the academic environment and everyday situations because both require successful communication. Halid, Hidayanti, and Elfiyanto (2024) claim that good listening skills are vital for diverse aspects of people's lives, including work, academic settings, personal relationships, and social interactions. Developing listening skills ensures that people will avoid misunderstandings and form more meaningful relationships.

Critical thinking includes abilities to analyze, evaluate, compare, contrast, and synthesize information (Halid, Hidayanti & Elfiyanto, 2024). Wulandari et al. (2019) consider thinking skills difficult to develop since they include complicated and intangible mental processes. In terms of education, critical thinking skills are important as they help to comprehend and navigate through challenging concepts or situations (Halid, Hidayanti & Elfiyanto, 2024). Thinking critically is viewed as the 21st-century talent to make reasonable decisions and come to conclusions based on facts.

Some research has looked into the connection between listening and critical thinking skills. Korshuk (2014) investigated the influence of video materials on students' critical thinking skills. The study found that students completing regular activities based on video materials progressed more quickly and improved not only listening skills but also critical thinking skills. Halid, Hidayanti, and Elfiyanto (2024) aimed to explore the advantages of involving English movies in language learning. Findings demonstrated that English movies encouraged students to think critically and improved their listening skills. Another study (Authors, 2024) focused on the impact of listening-viewing materials on students' perception of authentic video. The study confirmed the constant challenges authentic materials present and indicated students' positive attitude toward them despite difficulties. Therefore, the frequent use of authentic listening-viewing materials lowered students' anxiety and developed confidence.

Javorčíková and Badinská (2021) looked into undergraduate students' abilities to evaluate text critically and found out that students were not able to cope with four out of five items. Another research (Horváthová & Naďová, 2021) assessed teaching techniques that could develop students'

reading comprehension by applying Bloom's six-level taxonomy. According to the study, some strategies were beneficial for language education, and improving high-order thinking skills.

This study aimed to investigate the motivational impact of authentic listening-viewing materials on ESL students' critical thinking skills development. In addition, the study focuses on the role of activities designed according to revised L.W. Anderson and D.R. Krathwohl's taxonomy while learning with authentic aids. It is expected that this study will provide some valuable insights into using authentic listening-viewing aids to motivate to develop ESL university students' thinking skills. The lesson plans can be helpful materials to use in the classroom to improve motivation, critical thinking and listening skills.

2 Methodology

2.1. Purpose and Research Questions

The study aims to investigate the motivational impact of listening-viewing materials on the development of ESL students' critical thinking skills. Moreover, the open-ended questionnaire aids in gathering students' feedback on the application of listening-viewing materials and analyzing their attitude to the activities designed for videos, difficulties they faced, and language, and critical thinking skills that were developed in their opinion. More specifically, we are going to investigate the following research question: Can authentic listening-viewing materials serve as a motivational tool in critical thinking skills development?

The study involved quasi-experimental research. ESL university students' critical thinking skills were the dependent variables; the authentic listening-viewing materials and specially designed lesson plans were independent variables of the study.

2.2. Participants

The participants of the study were second-year students of the university doing their bachelor's degree in English philology including translation. Students belonged to one experimental group. The general number of participants was 17 who ranged in age from 18 to 19.

2.3. Procedure and Tools

The study consisted of four stages: a pre-test, an experimental period, a post-test, and an open-ended questionnaire. The first stage involved the experimental group completing a pre-test that was a Thinking Skills Assessment – TSA developed by Cambridge Assessment known as UCLES. TSA was designed to assist Cambridge University in making admissions decisions (Emery & Bell, 2007). The Cambridge Thinking Skills Assessment *TSA* aims to evaluate two types of thinking: critical thinking and problem solving. The TSA comprises two sections: 50 multiple-choice questions and a writing task (Lenkeit & Caro et al., 2019). We employed only the multiple-choice test since it requires the selection of one correct option out of five and especially assesses students' thinking skills. A writing task may involve creativity and imagination which are not the targets of this study.

The test questions are similar to those that students may encounter in university work and focus on teachable skills essential for higher education such as making decisions, solving problems, comparing, evaluating, contracting, clarifying, and interpreting ideas. The Cambridge Thinking Skills Assessment *TSA* views problem-solving skills as parallel to critical thinking skills. Therefore, test questions that contain quantitative and spatial data focus on problem-solving. TSA is highly beneficial for our study, as it consists of novel problems that participants did not face at school and,

as a result, do not have ready answers. If they possess diverse critical thinking abilities, they will be able to handle the test (Fisher, 2005).

The second stage included the experimental period that lasted for four months (the fall term). The study took place during the speaking and listening course taught with the textbook *Outcomes Intermediate B1* (Dellar & Walkley, 2016). The listening component of the course was extended by integrating additional listening-viewing aids from the textbook *Roadmap* B1 and B1+ (Jones & Berlis, 2019). Students covered three topics throughout the term, and we added video classes. The topic *Jobs & Careers* included the videos *Spun Candy, Garrick Watches* (B1), and *An Actor's Life* (B1). The next topic *Health and Illnesses* involved the videos *Karate lesson* (B1), *The vegan food stall* (B1+), *The first aid lesson* (B1+), and *Walking football* (B1+). The last topic *Technology* contained videos: *A virtual reality experience* (B1) and *The Repair café* (B1).

We created the activities for the mentioned videos ourselves. However, some exercises were taken from *Roadmap* B1 and B1+ and supplemented with our activities developed according to revised Bloom's taxonomy of critical thinking skills by Anderson, L.W. & Krathwohl, D.R. As suggested Roadmap activities followed the listening class structure of pre-listening, while-listening and post-listening stages but they did not engage all taxonomy's levels. We intended to evaluate the motivational impact of authentic listening-viewing materials on the development of ESL students' critical thinking skills Therefore, the lesson plans covered all taxonomy levels: remembering, understanding, applying, analyzing, evaluating, and creating. The experimental group studied with the developed lesson plans and watched the videos.

The third stage consisted of the post-test, which was the Cambridge Thinking Skills Assessment, and had different questions. Both TSA tests had identical structures and established standards, so we could focus exclusively on their results and compare them to make conclusions about students' critical thinking skills. The fourth stage of the research involved the open-ended questionnaire. The questionnaire consisted of four questions that the authors of the article designed. The purpose of that tool was to gather feedback on classes that involved authentic listening-viewing materials, critical thinking skills, and language skills, students were able to improve, in their opinion, the challenges they faced while completing video activities. The students filled in the questionnaire remotely on Google Forms. The questionnaire was anonymous so they could give honest answers and be open about the problems they experienced.

2.4. Analysis

In our research we used descriptive (to summarize and describe the main features of the data) and inferential statistics (to make predictions or generalizations about a population based on sample data). The statistical analysis included the following techniques: mean, median, mode, variance, standard deviation, and hypothesis testing. Data analysis was conducted using open-source statistical software JASP. A paired Student's *t*-test was used to compare the means of the experimental group (EG) to determine whether there was a statistically significant difference between the results of pre- and post-tests. To gather students' feedback on working with authentic listening-viewing materials and completing tasks based on Revised Bloom's Taxonomy, an open-ended questionnaire was administered via Google Forms.

3 Result and Discussion

Table 3.1. The Results of the Pre-Test and Post-Test

	Pre-test	Post-test
Mean	7.76	12.41
SD	2.59	3.64
SEM	0.63	0.88
N	17	17

A paired Student's *t*-test was conducted to compare students' critical thinking scores before and after our intervention. There was a significant increase in scores from the pre-test (M = 7.76, SD = 2.59) to the post-test (M = 12.41, SD = 3.64). The value of *t* is 9.302168. The value of *p* is < .00001. The result is significant at p < .05.This indicates that the intervention has a strong positive effect on the development of critical thinking skills. The observed improvement was both statistically and practically significant.

3.2. Post-Experimental Questionnaire

After completing the post-test, the experimental group was asked to fill in the open-ended questionnaire to collect information about the experimental classes. The participants used pseudonyms as follows: Person 1, Person 3, Person 3, etc. The description of the questionnaire results, including the participants' responses to each of the five questions, were explained below.

Question 1. Did you find the content of classroom videos engaging and relevant to the class/ topic objectives? Why or why not?

Participants' statements were explained in the excerpts below:

> *"To my mind, those videos were relevant to our class and topic because we can learn new phrases and words. Also, we can improve our knowledge about different topics and things."* (Person 1)
> *"To be honest, watching these videos was really engaging, but sometimes it was less interesting. However, I think it was a good listening practice."* (Person 2)
> *"The videos were engaging because while watching we trained our understanding of speech by ear."* (Person 3)
> *"I find it engaging and relevant to the topics because all videos contain relevant vocabulary."* (Person 4)
> *"Yes, the videos were engaging and relevant as they aligned well with the class objectives."* (Person 5)
> *"Yes, the topics of those videos were quite relevant."* (Person 6)

Question 2. How would you compare the experience of learning through videos to traditional listening exercises in class?

Participants' statements were explained in the excerpts below:

"To my mind, it is easier and more interesting to learn through videos than through traditional ways." (Person 1)
"As for me, listening to the video is a better option because we can also receive some interesting facts and listen to conversations that are quite similar to real speech." (Person 2)
"For me video is more interesting than just audio, as when we watch video, we can see something interesting, and when we listen only to audio, I think that it is also useful but not so gripping." (Person 3)
"Videos including more interesting content and audio are just prepared by the topics. Generally, that's the same concerning listening skills." (Person 4)
"I think videos are a better experience because they provide more information for understanding the language." (Person 5)
"Videos are more engaging and provide visual support, making the content clearer than traditional listening exercises." (Person 6)

Question 3. How confident do you feel about your listening and thinking skills after having completed the series of classes based on authentic videos? What do you still struggle with?

Participants' statements were explained in the excerpts below:

"I feel much more confident and don't have any struggles." (Person 1)
"In general, I feel a little bit more confident about my listening skills but sometimes it's difficult for me to express my opinion in English." (Person 2)
"I feel more confident, but I still struggle with understanding fast speech or strong accents." (Person 3)
"After the video activities, I feel more confident about my listening and critical thinking skills." (Person 4)
"Even though I'm still not that confident about my skills, these classes definitely helped me to boost my confidence, l guess." (Person 5)
"I can say that I perceive audio information much easier than before, but sometimes it is still difficult to focus and listen." (Person 6)

Question 4. Have you faced any challenges while watching the videos in class? If yes, what were those difficulties?

Participants' statements were explained in the excerpts below:

"No, all was good and very understandable. Thank you for heading such type of lessons! It was great and diverse." (Person 1)
"No, l haven't." (Persons 2 and 3)
"Sometimes it was difficult to open a file with a video." (Person 4)
"Yes, difficulties include fast speech, unfamiliar accents, and technical vocabulary." (Person 5)
"No, I can't say I've faced any difficulties." (Person 6)

Judging by students' answers, the videos were engaging and relevant to the class objectives, but one student said that some videos were boring. Moreover, students improved their skills to compare, contrast, and evaluate information. Furthermore, the experimental group found learning through videos easier, and more interesting than traditional listening activities because of the visual support. After completing a series of classes based on authentic videos, students felt more confident about their listening skills. However, they admitted that fast speech and accents made listening challenging.

3.3. Discussion

In this study, we investigated the motivational impact of authentic listening-viewing materials on students' critical thinking skills development. Our results show that authentic listening-viewing materials (videos) motivate students to take an active part in the lessons and, therefore, improve their critical thinking skills.

Similar results were reported by Cisterna-Zenteno et al. (2022), who found that the use of videos effectively helped first-year undergraduate students improve their higher-order critical thinking skills. In contrast, the findings of Atayeva (2019), who found that using short videos in English language classrooms to improve high school students' critical thinking skills was unsuccessful. She concluded that most students could only reach fair levels of critical thinking.

It should be also mentioned that, the activities in Atayeva (2019) research did not aim to develop high-order critical thinking skills, whereas the tasks in Cisterna-Zenteno et al. (2022) study were specifically designed to develop them. As a result, Atayeva (2019) concluded that watching videos does not improve critical thinking skills themselves and suggested that teachers should implement other tools specifically designed to enhance them. Hence, we assume that the usage of listening-viewing materials serves as a tool to get students involved in the lessons which, in turn, designed to develop students' critical thinking skills, but the videos themselves do not develop them.

According to David A. Sousa (2017) a highly motivated learner can, for example, process items in working memory longer than non-motivated. People who are intensely motivated about a subject can spend hours reading and processing it. They are not likely to quit until they are physically tired. Motivation is a key to the amount of attention devoted to a learning situation.

Ainagul Mukhtarkhanova et al. (2023) has analysed many recent researches of the integration of multimedia technologies including audiovisual materials in the learning process and its impact on students' motivation. Her results show that it boosts the students' motivation and contributes to the development of students' cognitive abilities. She adds that conventional methods can no longer meet the needs of society and the education system. Students will better master information using intelligent multimedia technologies. This will help them feel motivated and enjoy the education process.

We also conducted a questionnaire to gather students' feedback on the use of authentic listening-viewing materials and activities based on Revised Bloom's Taxonomy. The feedback indicated that such lessons were engaging and relevant. Students reported that these lessons helped them grasp the material and maintained their attention throughout. Additionally, the videos and activities supported students in practicing high-order critical thinking skills, such as comparing, contrasting, and evaluating. Moreover, students felt more confident about their critical thinking skills after completing the series of classes based on authentic videos and activities. Similar conclusions were drawn by June et al. (2014), who found that students had a positive view of using videos as a teaching tool, as they generated further interest in the topics discussed.

4 Conclusion

Our study aimed to investigate the motivational impact of authentic listening-viewing materials on ESL students' critical thinking skills development.

The feedback from students on the use of authentic listening-viewing materials indicates that they feel more confident in their critical thinking skills after completing our series of lessons. They also reported that the videos were engaging and relevant. The results of pre- and post-tests show the substantial difference in the means and the p-value was statistically significant. Therefore, we conclude that authentic listening-viewing materials can be effective tools for maintaining attention

and making lessons more engaging. Accordingly, they have a motivational impact on students' critical thinking development, but only if these lessons aim to develop such skills.

In conclusion, this research provides valuable insights into the motivational impact of authentic listening-viewing materials in developing students' critical thinking skills and highlights the importance of appropriately structuring activities in ESL lessons.

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