

# Reflecting Elements of Listening Comprehension; Survey

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## **Abstract**

*Listening comprehension is a complex process which requires a lot of aspects to be taken into consideration. In particular, following and understanding film in FL is even more difficult comparing to listening to just an episode in EFL (including ESP) teaching. There are no specific rules to follow during listening as in teaching pronunciation or grammar. This study explores to show students can improve their listening comprehension skills by watching films and what aspects (grammar and pronunciation rules, accents and dialects, terminology, traits and behavior of the people, situation) they need to follow in order to understand whole film and comprehend oral production of the film characters. To find out about the impact of those issues, we carried out experiments with students at the Faculty of Oil and gas, Karshi Engineering- Economic institute, Karshi, Uzbekistan. The 60 respondents - 3<sup>rd</sup> year students were involved in the questionnaire survey aimed at their motivation to watch the films and some elements which help them to better understand content of audio-visual material. Besides, we did an interview with students to identify their attitudes and opinions about the use of films in ESP classes. To accomplish our research we used the five-point Likert Scale.*

**Key words:** *ESP classes, ESP students, listening comprehension, elements, survey*

## **I. Introduction**

Foreign language acquisition is a long, complex process, being used in many domains of human activity as an instrument in spoken and written contexts. We prefer teaching English through films, displaying episode of different specialists' physical settings. Furthermore, an audio-video material consists of different messages learners are intended to study. Multiple messages of the episode directly conveys as an input to listeners without any barriers while watching and it also varies according to the topic of specialties (engineering, medicine and economics) which learners are trained by. In teaching English for specific purposes, communication and listening activities are being considered to be main objectives of language classes and requires learners demonstrate their performance orally and written. Learners are able to get sufficient knowledge on their expertise from the documentaries. Besides, while listening to someone, we do not only try to understand her/his speech but also receive needful information limitless. Consequently, one of the most vital skills in language learning is listening comprehension because without

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perceiving speakers' uttered words, no listening comprehension will be, instead, misunderstanding may happen. English is rich in words usually delivering from a person to person by hearing more rapidly than writing letters. What's more, a discussion among learners enables them to improve not only their communicative skills but also listening comprehension.

Learners must watch documentary films, concerning profession in order to be equipped with needful records and to enrich their linguistic potential. Additionally, movies are well motivating media because of portraying various topics, consisting of both audio and visual stimuli. The benefits of using video material for language learning are their images and sound that help set the scene of events and its additional information, such as the paralinguistic features, provided as support to listening comprehension (Guichon & Mc Lornan, 2008; Katchen, 1996a). The contents of documentaries consist of linguistic elements such as grammar rule and pronunciation: accents and dialects, terminology, traits and behavior of the people, and target situation. Learners may be able to have their language skills improved grammatically, phonologically and lexically with the promotion of the visual aids. The purpose of this research is to find out which elements occurring in films promote learners better comprehending the features of the episode. Moreover, we carried out an experiment with experimental groups (NGI-121 (17) NGI-125 (17), NGQ-143(17), NGT-146(17), and MCC-145 (17)) from the specialty of (1) development of oil and gas fields, (2) oil and gas processing technology, (3) technologic machines and equipments. A survey based on an interview with sixty selected ESP learners regarding to the essential elements depicted in the films and which of them promote students better understand the content of the episode. They were involved in the questionnaire to choose any options accordingly. Besides, we also did an interview with sixty engineering students, having accomplished the five-point Likert Scale in order to know their attitudes, opinions according to films they watch in ESP classes. As a result, findings were extensively discussed.

## II. Literature Review

The academic, workplace and professional environment to which ESP students are headed may be little different from other environments in regard to the importance of social intercourse. It has been taken for granted that ESP teaching should focus on 'hard' language functions rather

than 'soft' social functions (Helen Basturkmen. 2006:22). In ESP classes the listeners must discriminate between sounds, understand vocabulary and grammatical structures, interpret stress and intonation, retain what was gathered in all of the above, and interpret it within the immediate as well as the larger socio-cultural context of the utterance" (Vandergrift, 1999:168). Consequently, it is foremost in involving learners learning subject matter in English through documentaries consisting of episode portrayed target place where native speakers performed. William (1990) stated that even a single good movie provides a self-contained world with language expressed in a visual context. Yagang (1993) reports that listening comes through four variables: a message, the speaker, the listener and the physical settings. Equipping ESP courses with audio-visuals might have positive effects in teaching as it provides an environment rich in opportunities for students to develop their understanding and could demonstrate interesting and meaningful thoughts. Besides, amusing images illustrates effective results in learning a language because they initiate and pursue situational interest. Discipline-specific context provides an opportunity for multiple encounters with target vocabulary and therefore, is effective in teaching (Enrico & Marija, 2012). However,

Goh (1999) reported that most common problems faced by students in listening in the order of frequency are quickly forgetting what is heard, not recognizing the words they know, understanding the message but not the intended message, neglecting next part while thinking about meaning, enabling to form a mental representation from words heard. Additionally, not being an objective art, cinema is often used as a didactic medium in pre-and postgraduate student training, both in the areas of social and engineering (Dickens et al., 2018). One of the goals of audio-visual materials is to awaken feelings and the critical sense of the recipient by promoting collective reflection on a specific topic (Helgevold and Moen, 2015; Rieger et al., 2018). Documentary movies explaining the features of engineering, especially petroleum engineering, are increasing and there seems to be a considerable audience (learners and employees in the area of occupation) who show great interest in it.

### **Elements of listening Comprehension**

ESP learners have some difficulties in comprehending English spoken to them as they communicate with native speakers or listen to authentic context orally or written. Listening comprehension is a vital skill in language acquisition process and its development is of prime concern to language teacher (Dunkel, 1991). Having gained theoretical knowledge and practical experience promote learners comprehending the essence of aural input and associate it with the contextual information. The process of listening entails decoding and constructing essence from the verbal and nonverbal messages (Goh and Hu, 2014) as well as listening practices are deemed to help in recognizing the characteristic differences among sounds and comprehending the grammatical structures (Chien and Hsu, 2013). The essence of prosodic proof and language input are significant to apprehend and be able to decipher the communication context. Furthermore, listening is also deemed as a difficult ability to comprehend that may require sufficient mental effort (Tomprowski et al., 2015). Two major steps are entailed in the listening comprehension: The first approach allows listeners to explain the context of the message to other listeners; whereas, the second approach entails receiving, memorizing and repeating the sounds.

According to the statement of Barker (1971) listening can help students build vocabulary, develop language proficiency and improve language usage but Underwood (1989) organizes the major problems in listening comprehension as follows:

- lack of control over the speed at which speakers speak ;
- not being able to get things repeated;
- the listener's limited vocabulary;
- failure to recognize the "signals;
- problems of interpretation;
- inability to concentrate;
- established learning habits.

Field (2003) stated some problems learners encounter are those: they know the word, but get the wrong sense and phonetic variation of a word misleads them. Besides, ESP learners may know the words in written form because they often spend their time reading authentic texts on their profession, but sometimes make errors in comprehending oral forms, therefore, they are unable to perceive the words appearing in spoken discourse. Yousif (2006) mentions more about psychological barriers in listening, the importance of speech rate in listening is to give breaks during a long listening activity. ESP students can improve their listening skills if they have background

knowledge on grammar, phonological elements such as accents, dialects, specific terminology in order to understand the contents of the film while watching, otherwise, misunderstanding may occur.

### **Study program**

According to the statement of Helen Basturkmen (2006) using technical texts, topics or tasks may turn to be demotivating but watching films could be involving and interesting.

We teach students with technical profiles at the faculty of oil and gas, Karshi Engineering-Economic institute, Karshi, Uzbekistan. Curriculum for Bachelor's program consists of four year study of English, the adult-learners study EFL at first course, and from second year till 4<sup>th</sup> course they study English for specific purposes. During the ESP class, each target group divides into 2 groups; 12 to12 or 14to14, and level of English is; beginner, intermediate, upper-intermediate. Therefore, we sometimes feel difficulty in teaching them English for specific purposes due to being them adult learners. We cannot teach them alphabet or fruits as doing young learners at schools or kindergarten; instead, we have to train them according to the requirement of program which consist of topics on profession in FL. In such case, we almost use documentary films which motivate them learning English with high interest. However, comprehension of video materials in FL are not easy, requires a lot of knowledge on grammar and pronunciation rules, different accents and dialects, terminology, traits and behavior of the people, situation and etc. Furthermore, sound is an important element in listening to L1 or FL, and gives us sign about something even we are listening to speech of the speaker from far distance. In the past, when no multimedia (movies, documentaries) was implemented in language classes, or internet-media like youtube, we had to visit local cinema to watch a film in L1, and relaxed, made a fun. However, at present, we may watch variety of movies which represent modern society where human employs in all spheres of life. Documentaries display an employment process of engineers doing their duties at target place and making social interaction with each others. Well comprehension of English for specific purposes or language itself is to have background knowledge on specialty in L1 and FL. In addition to hearing or perceiving a stream of sounds; listening also requires a comprehension of the speakers' intended message (Habib Gowhary. 2015:206) as well as it has been a cornerstone of many theories of foreign language acquisition (Flowerdew & Miller, 2005). Watching films in English is one of the richest ways of presenting authentic input because it is the combination of three mediums named; aural, visual and textual (Ogasawara, 1994). We usually prefer designing a curriculum with implementation of documentary films in ESP classes; those promote learners enhancing listening ability. However, we cannot always reach our aims. Therefore, we decided to carry out twofold experiments with ESP learners.

### **III. Materials and methods**

The aim for a 'thick description' of the target environments, approaches needs analysis involving in-depth ethnographic data collection methods such as observations and exploratory interviews (John & Dudley-Evans, 1991). Besides, the learners are often asked for their perceptions of needs but they may not be reliable sources of information about their own needs, especially if they are relatively unfamiliar with the job they are to perform or subject they are to study (Long, 1996).

The study made use of a quantitative data survey consisting of an open-ended questionnaire and five-point Likert Scale, based on qualitative data via oral interviews;

1. Carried out experiment with sixty students on the issues of which elements are important to follow in order to better understand content of audio-visual material (diagram 1)

2. We did an interview with students to identify their attitudes and opinions about the use of films in ESP classes. To accomplish our research we used the five-point Likert Scale which was employed in rating weight as: strongly agree, agree, undecided, and strongly disagree (table 1).

In teaching technical and semi-technical vocabulary, grammar rules, and phonological elements through films, we equip our learners with instructions in acquisition subject matter in English. While watching films, learners encounter the issues connected with realization of episode during the ESP classes; those motivated us to conduct a research in order to find a solution to the issues. The research conducted in Uzbekistan, Karshi Engineering-Economic institute, Faculty of oil and gas, among ESP students who were 3<sup>rd</sup> course in the ages of 19, 20, and 24. This investigation was applied in five different groups in order to find out their better comprehension of documentary films in English, especially, records of petroleum engineering. During the 1<sup>st</sup> semester we implemented documentary films about the features of petroleum engineering in English in 5 groups (NGI-121 (17) NGI-125 (17), NGQ-143(17), NGT-146(17), MCC-145 (17)) as an experiment.

Besides, we carried out experiment with engineering students on the issues of what aspects (grammar and pronunciation rules, accents and dialects, terminology, traits and behavior of the people, situation) are important to understand whole context in the visual aid. The survey based on open-ended questionnaire with some questions, including four options to choose. The period of this research took 3 months; October, November, December 2019. The students were asked to choose the elements which promoted them better understand events or messages of the episode during the listening activity. Additionally, as we mentioned above, we made an experiment with experimental groups (NGI-121 (17) NGI-125 (17), NGQ-143(17), NGT-146(17), and MCC-145 (17)) from the specialty of (1) development of oil and gas fields, (2) oil and gas processing technology, (3) technologic machines and equipments. Numbers of students were 60. During the research, respondents were involved in the questionnaire.

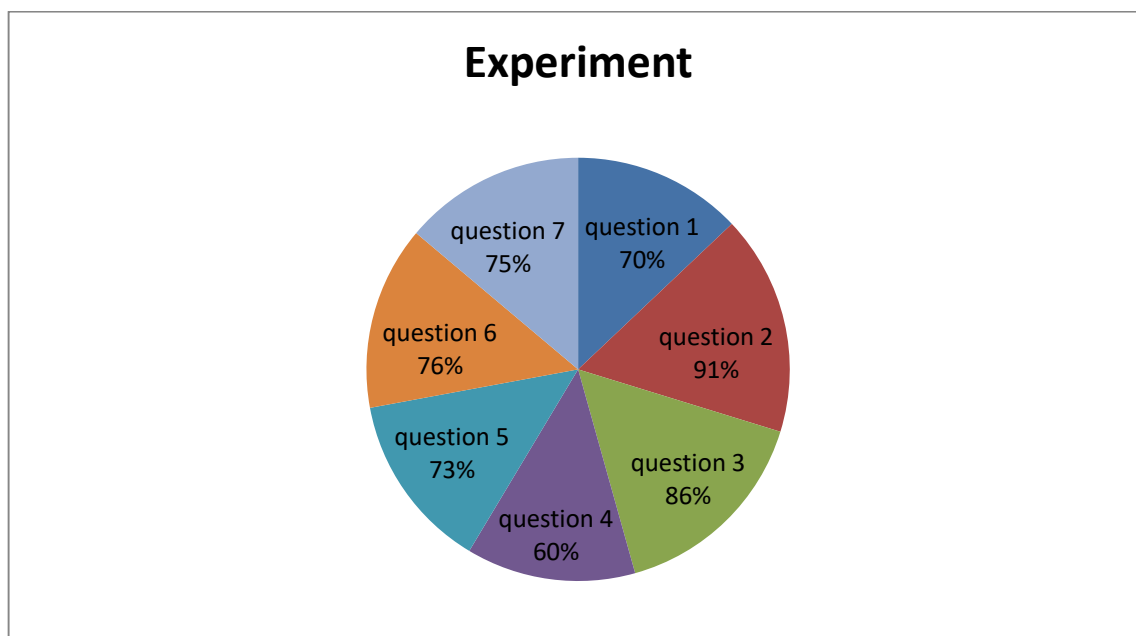
The open-ended questionnaire consists of followings;

1. Should you know grammar rules sounded in the visual context?
  - a) Yes, we should know them due to well comprehending whole context ;
  - b) Impossible, we cannot follow the grammar rules used in speech of film characters acting in the episode;
  - c) Yes, we sometimes need it in order to understand the speech of an actor/actress correctly;
  - d) Yes, without grammar rules, unable to learn a language, and perceive the message.
2. Should you be familiar with different accents and dialects pronounced in the film?
  - a) Yes, we should be familiar with accents and dialects spoken among film characters in the episode;
  - b) I think , they are not so important to follow because we are already familiar with them;
  - c) Yes, we have to know them due to acquiring vocabulary words correctly
  - d) Yes, they enable us to better understand subject matter in English;
3. Do you have to know terminology used in the film beforehand?
  - a) Yes, of course, we have to know terminology of our field of expertise because they are very difficult to guess;

- b) Yes, we should be familiar with it in advance, in order to realize whole context;
  - c) No need, because we may learn it from target situation described in the visual context;
  - d) Yes, we must have already known it in L1
4. Should you have a post-experience of target situation depicted in the documentaries?
- a) Yes, we should have
  - b) No, need
  - c) Yes, we should be familiar with target situation because it would be easy to understand the event in the documentary film;
  - d) Yes, we must have a post-experience of target situation portrayed in the film.
5. Do traits and behavior of the film characters help you to comprehend whole episode in English?
- a) Yes, they do
  - b) No, they do not
  - c) No, I am not sure
  - d) Yes, they help us to better understand the event because of their impact on our feeling and emotion.
6. Is it important to follow the speech of each speaker in the documentary film?
- a) Yes, it is very important, if we listen to the spoken context of each speaker attentively, that may enable us to better analyze the message and apprehend the words.
  - b) No, if we follow their speech one by one, we may confuse with ideas that cause misunderstanding;
  - c) No need if we are aware with target situation in L1
  - d) Not so important.
7. To what extent your comprehension improves while watching documentary films?
- a) 50%   b) 70%   c) 100%   d) 30%

#### **IV. The Findings and Discussion**

1. Diagram; the results of collected data on having carried out experiment with sixty students according to the issues connected with the elements ESP students have chosen during the interview;



The result of the scientific analysis from the collected data during the interview and presented followings;

According to the 1<sup>st</sup> question, option (d) was chosen by 45 respondents, having indicated 70 % in result, which meant that students preferred having known grammar rules used in the episode because without knowledge of them, learners are unable to acquire a language, perceive the content of the film.

The discussion on the 2<sup>nd</sup> question showed option (d), was chosen by 55 students, indicated 91%. Accents and dialects vary according to the people, nations and countries, for example, they, in Great Britain, are more different comparing with those in U.S or India, therefore, 91% students positively expressed their thoughts about being familiar with accents and dialects sounded in the episode, otherwise, it may mislead to confusion with others.

Survey, having done upon 3<sup>rd</sup> question indicated options (b and d) were chosen (86%) by 52 students simultaneously because both options showed the same ideas. Learners expressed their ideas according to terminology which is the one of the elements they need to acquire in better comprehension documentary films in listening activity.

Data on 4<sup>th</sup> question showed an option (d) which indicated 60% students agree with the idea described in the question. It means listeners must have post-experience in the field of their specialty in order to comprehend the content of the audio-visual material.

Scientific analysis of the 5<sup>th</sup> question presented options (a and d) were chosen (73%) by 44 respondents. Traits and behavior of the film characters promote them better comprehending the event because it directly impacts listeners' feeling and emotion in figuring out the situation.

According to collected data on 6<sup>th</sup> question indicated that option (a) was chosen (76%) by 46 students. They discussed and concluded that it is very important, if we listen to the spoken context of each speaker attentively, that may enable us to better analyze the message and apprehend the words. Interview made on 7<sup>th</sup> question showed that an option (a) was right answer which was chosen (75%) by 45 students; if learners watch the documentaries in their field of study, their listening comprehension on that subject will be improved more.

Furthermore, native-speakers from different countries or nations speak in variety of accents and dialects, for example, one utters American English but other does Indian English which confuses learners to understand the content of the film while watching it. As it seems comprehending English is not easy, it requires learners a lot of knowledge on linguistic aspects in order to perceive while listening. What's more, according to grammar rules (word order or part of speech like noun or verb, or sentence construction) is one of the aspects to know in order to better understand whole episode because if we are not familiar with noun or tenses with verbs used, these may cause making errors in comprehension the episode. Likewise, it is very important for listeners to know terminology of their field of study because without it, they are unable to acquire specialty in English. Therefore, professionally-oriented terminology is considered to be foremost element to promote learners comprehend whole context while they are watching audio-visual materials in FL. Besides, traits and behavior of the film characters is also considered to be main element in involving learners better realization of whole episode. Teacher should exploit authentic video materials in all levels of language instruction in order to involve students in activities that reflect real-life listening (Herron and Seay, 1991). As a consequence, all kinds of authentic materials are commonly accepted as helpful for learners, watching films in English is one of the richest ways of presenting authentic input, because it is the combination of three mediums named; aural, visual and textual (Ogasawara, 1994). Even captions in the films present extra linguistic features such as facial expression and gestures and may reinforce learners' comprehension of the conversations (Chapple & Curtis, 2000).

Table 1. Students' attitudes the benefits of developing listening skills through watching films (N=60)

Description	Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Watching documentary films about petroleum engineering, motivates students learning subject matter in FL.	40 (67%)	10 (17%)	7 (11%)	2 (3%)	1(2%)
Watching professionally-oriented films make students feel boring and put barriers in learning English	5 (8%)	4(6%)	0	42 (70%)	9 (15%)
Films with different episodes improved my listening skills	45 (75%)	6 (10%)	7(11%)	1(2%)	1(2%)
While watching documentary movies, students acquire technical and semi-technical vocabulary, slang and idioms, and know how to pronounce unknown words in different dialects and accents.	40(67%)	7(11%)	10(17%)	2(3%)	1(2%)



Watching films promote students memorizing terminology quickly.	30(50%)	10(17%)	10(17%)	6(10%)	4(7%)
Films teach ESP students how to communicate with native-experts in the area of study	40 (67%)	10(17%)	6(10%)	2(3%)	2(3%)
ESP students are willing to watch movies with subtitles	30(50%)	5(8%)	5(8%)	17(28%)	3(5%)
ESP students prefer watching films without subtitles	20(33%)	10(17%)	5(8%)	15(25%)	5(8%)
Listening to audio-visual materials are easy way to learn English quickly	20(33%)	10(17%)	10(17%)	17(28%)	3(5%)
I am totally satisfied with audio-visual materials which enhanced my listening skills.	40(67%)	3(5%)	7(11%)	9(15%)	0
I am interested in learning English for specific purposes through documentaries which display my area of expertise.	25 (42%)	5(8%)	13(22%)	10(17%)	7(11%)
Films give ESP students instructions, clue to better know the features about specialty more than depicted in written contexts.	18(30%)	12(20%)	5(8%)	12(20%)	13(22%)
Watching films is to make a fun and time to relax.	35(58%)	18(30%)	0	7(11%)	0

Results from the collected data in the table 1 indicated that students preferred watching documentary films about petroleum engineering because those motivated them to learn subject matter in English (84%). However, students feel boring as they watch professionally-oriented films which put them barriers in acquiring English (14%), but others expressed their disagreement to the statement (86%). Besides, learners also realized that films with different contents improved their listening ability (85%) as well as watching documentary movies, enable them acquire technical and semi-technical vocabulary, slang and idioms, and know how to pronounce unknown words in different dialects and accents (78%). Additionally, films enable learners memorize terminology quickly (67%) and these give instructions or clues to ESP students how to communicate with native-experts in the area of study (84%),

consequently, listeners are willing to follow documentary movie with subtitles (58%), on the contrary that respondents prefer observing them without subtitles (50%). Additionally, listening to audio-visual materials are easy way to learn English quickly in ESP classes (50%), and they are totally satisfied with visual aid which enhanced their listening comprehension (72%). Besides, students were interested in learning English for specific purposes through documentary films which display their area of expertise (50%). Moreover, documentaries give ESP students records about the features of profession more than depicted in written context (50%), and consider that watching them is to make a fun and time to relax (88%). As we came into conclusion that movies, documentary or other types motivate learners learning English and subject matter, involving them learning English without interruption and making fun. The five-point Likert scale instrument promoted us to identify learners' perception and attitudes according to watching audio-visual products and its positive influences on learners in ESP classes.

## V. Conclusion

Acquisition foreign language and being proficient in English is not easy, which requires learners having knowledge on grammar and phonetic rules, vocabulary. This research shows that students can improve their listening ability by watching films. We equip ESP classes with audio-visual materials at present in listening activity at the Faculty of oil and gas, Karshi Engineering-Economic Institute, Karshi, Uzbekistan. ESP learners are mostly adults and their level of competence in English language varies; beginner, intermediate levels. We carried out twofold experiments with the 3<sup>rd</sup> course students. Survey based on interviews with experimental groups (NGI-121 (17) NGI-125 (17), NGQ-143(17), NGT-146(17), and MCC-145 (17). The numbers of students were 60. The instrument was open-ended questionnaire consists of some questions, included four options to choose. Furthermore, we also employed five-point Likert scale in order to find out the opinions and perceptions of learners according to the films they follow in ESP classes. The main aim of this research was to identify learners' attitudes according to the elements depicted in episode while listening to movie. As a result, according to the first survey, findings showed that students should have knowledge on the following elements mentioned below while listening to an episode in order to better understand the film. These elements were followings;

- Grammar rules; being aware of (part of speech, sentence construction).
- Phonological elements (accents/dialects)
- Being familiar with terminology
- To have post-experience of target situation
- Traits and behavior of film characters.

Besides, the result of second interview based on five-point Likert scale instrument revealed that students are in great need to watch films due to being able to better acquire language and subject matter through them and their opinions according to following them indicated almost 80%.

### Further Recommendations

In designing a curriculum as well as material writing or accomplishing audio-visual materials in ESP classes, ESP practitioners should pay more attention to the learners' background knowledge on grammar and pronunciation rules, accents and dialects, terminology and post-experience, otherwise, learners may feel boring while misunderstanding the content of the films with no interest in them.

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