# Voice of America in the Classroom: Assessing Its Educational Value for Listening Comprehension in High School English Classes

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**ABSTRACT**
This study examines the relationship between the use of Voice of America (VOA) videos and students' listening comprehension in English language courses through a mixed-methods explanatory sequential design, addressing the ongoing debate on the effectiveness of authentic media in language learning. Given the increasing reliance on digital content for language acquisition, this study explores whether VOA videos offer measurable advantages over traditional listening materials in debating issues: why is it significant? The research includes quantitative data collection involving listening comprehension tests and surveys with Likert-scale questionnaires, followed by qualitative data gathered through structured interviews. Quantitative analysis using SPSS and Pearson correlation indicates a weak positive relationship between VOA video use and listening performance ($r = 0.108$, $p = 0.651$), which is statistically insignificant. Qualitative insights suggest that VOA videos provide exposure to authentic pronunciation, intonation, and accents, and may contribute to increased motivation for learning. Thematic analysis identifies challenges, such as the speed of speech and the presence of technical terminology. In general, the students' listening comprehension scores showed improvement, with a median score of 80/100. The findings suggest that integrating authentic video materials like VOA into language instruction may have pedagogical value while also highlighting limitations for broader applicability.

**Keywords**: English language learning, listening comprehension, Voice of America (VOA) videos

## INTRODUCTION

Listening comprehension plays a crucial role in language acquisition, as it allows learners to decode spoken language accurately. Research suggests that strong listening skills contribute to better pronunciation, vocabulary retention, and overall communication ability. Without effective listening comprehension, students may struggle with real-life conversations, academic lectures, and professional interactions, highlighting its significance in language proficiency development. It plays a crucial role in mastering the English language, which is essential for effective communication. Additionally, strong listening skills form the foundation for developing other language abilities, such as speaking, reading, and writing. Intensive listening provides exposure to authentic spoken language, allowing learners to quickly acquire vocabulary (Masrai, 2020). Research conducted by Ly, N. N., & Nga, N. T. (2020) showed that intensive listening practice significantly improved participants' vocabulary acquisition skills. Listening requires focused attention, allowing the listener to hear and make sense of what they



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hear. Therefore, when learning a foreign language, it is essential to develop our listening skills (Alzamil, 2021).

Listening is not merely a recognition skill; it also involves the listener's ability to identify key aspects, such as the sound system, and to interpret and make sense of the information received from the speaker (Tasya et al., 2018). Listening holds a crucial position as one of the four fundamental skills necessary for learning a language. It is widely recognized that listening is the most important skill for developing language proficiency and plays a significant role in achieving overall language competence (Astrid et al., 2024). According to Fitria (2021), listening is a vital component of learning English, enabling us to understand what others are conveying. The listener should be attentive and grasp what the speaker intends to communicate during a conversation, especially in specific contexts (Harianja et al., 2022). Effective communication requires both a speaker and a listener. A study by Chang et al. (2019) revealed that students frequently struggle to understand speech in the language they are learning, often because speakers tend to talk too quickly. Despite its importance, many students encounter difficulties in developing their listening skills due to unfamiliar accents, limited vocabulary, and inadequate proficiency in authentic spoken English. These challenges underscore the necessity for innovative and engaging learning strategies aimed at enhancing students' ability to comprehend what they hear.

In the digital era, multimedia resources have become invaluable tools in language education. According to Prabawati et al. (2021), teachers can use media to develop engaging and effective teaching and learning processes. Using media helps motivate students and keeps them interested in learning. Teachers should be creative and inventive in their use of media to prevent boredom and enhance the effectiveness of the teaching process. Ramli (2020) states that media can include various audio and video components, such as videotapes, films, and slide shows. The advancement of technology is shifting education from traditional methods to digital Approaches (Kurniawan & Kuswandi, 2021). The researcher prefers using news videos for listening instruction, as they are an effective way to teach listening skills and improve students' listening abilities. One excellent resource is Voice of America (VOA) videos, which provide learners with authentic and varied English audio-visual content.

VOA videos are particularly beneficial because they present real-life contexts, diverse accents, and cultural insights that help learners bridge the gap between classroom learning and practical communication. This aligns with global language acquisition theories, which emphasize the importance of exposure to authentic language use in different contexts (Krashen, 1982; Vandergrift & Goh, 2012). Furthermore, studies have shown that integrating multimedia resources, such as VOA videos, into language learning enhances comprehension and engagement among students from diverse linguistic backgrounds (Rost, 2016; Graham, 2017).

Voice of America is an internationally recognized multimedia television company that provides services in over 40 languages. Reaching an audience of 141 million people worldwide each week, Voice of America offers news, information, and social programs through the Internet, portable devices, social media, radio, and television (Astuti et al., 2019). This global reach underscores its relevance as a language learning tool beyond the Indonesian context, making it a valuable resource for learners in various international settings. VOA Learning English is part of the Voice of America multimedia channel, available on websites and in smartphone apps that contain an extensive list of daily news and podcasts on various topics (Rahmaningtyas & Mardhiyyah, 2021). As an educational media, the VOA website not only allows learners to listen to content but also to view and interact with it (Risawati, 2020). Abdi and Makiabadi (2019) suggested using VOA to learn English, utilizing useful features such as transcription, vocabulary lists, and podcasts, which make listening assignments more convenient and practical for students across different regions. Most students agreed that they enjoyed using VOA videos in listening lessons (Andasari et al. 2021). Additionally, Astuti et al. (2020) mention that with the use of VOA, students' scores could improve in listening comprehension, a finding consistent with research in other educational contexts that highlights

the effectiveness of multimedia-based instruction (Mayer, 2021; Chapelle, 2018). Andasari et al. (2021) state that there are many advantages to using VOA, as it motivates, inspires, and attracts students in listening classes to acquire new knowledge. The VOA Learning English media program encourages students to imitate the pronunciation of native speakers, which in turn increases their enthusiasm, improves their fluency, and significantly boosts their self-confidence (Surayya et al., 2024). The practice of VOA encourages students to contribute to listening practice. Vaishnavi and Gandhi (2020) confirm that using the VOA website can improve listening skills.

In connection with the above rationale, researchers are interested in conducting research related to listening skills for students in the English section and those studying English on their own. This study aims to address the limitations of previous research by exploring the relationship between the use of VOA videos and students' listening comprehension in an English course. While prior studies have examined multimedia tools for language learning, they have not sufficiently addressed the specific impact of VOA videos, nor have they resolved inconsistencies in findings regarding their effectiveness in enhancing listening skills. This study focuses on the relationship between the use of VOA videos and students' perception of spoken English in an English language course. By integrating VOA videos into listening classes, teachers strive to introduce students to authentic spoken English and to engage their interest. The purpose of this study is to investigate or identify students' perceptions of using VOA videos as a learning resource for listening comprehension. This involves evaluating the advantages and potential limitations of integrating VOA videos into the teaching and learning process in an English course setting.

This research examines the relationship between VOA videos and students' listening comprehension in English courses. Specifically, it seeks to answer the following research questions: (1) How does the use of VOA videos influence students' listening comprehension in EFL learning? (2) In what ways can the VOA Channel be integrated effectively into English courses to enhance student engagement and achievement? Furthermore, this study explores the potential of the VOA Channel as a learning resource. The results are expected to provide empirical evidence for educational practitioners, teachers, and students, supporting the adoption of VOA videos as a strategy for improving student achievement in EFL. For English language teachers, this study offers insights into how VOA videos can serve as an effective tool to enhance students' listening skills. Teachers can adapt the findings to develop interactive and student-centred learning strategies. For students, VOA videos may increase motivation and improve comprehension by providing exposure to authentic English through a combination of audio and visual materials, helping them familiarize themselves with different accents and real-life conversations. Additionally, for English language courses, this research offers guidance to educational institutions in selecting or developing engaging and effective learning materials, ultimately improving the quality of their instructional services

## METHOD

This research used mixed methods to evaluate the relationship between the use of VOA videos and this study explores students' perceptions of listening comprehension in an English language course, focusing on their experiences with speech perception through auditory input. Conducted at Kingston Course an English course in Pagaralam, this research examined how students engaged with spoken English in an academic setting.

The participants in this study included twenty students, aged 15-18 years old with varying levels of English proficiency, ranging from beginner. The sample consisted of both male and female students who were enrolled in the Kingston Course, providing a diverse perspective on how learners with different backgrounds and skill levels perceived spoken English. Analysing these perceptions, this study aimed to contribute valuable insights into the challenges and

strategies students used when processing spoken English. The findings might help educators refine their teaching methods to enhance listening comprehension in EFL/ESL classrooms.

In the framework of this study, which employs an explanatory sequential design, quantitative data were first collected and analyzed, followed by the collection and analysis of qualitative data to explain the quantitative findings. Moreover, Creswell & Clark (2017) mentioned some kinds of sequential design. The primary design was exploratory sequential, and the other was explanatory sequential. This research paid special attention to the explanatory sequential design that employed mixed methods research. In the explanatory sequential design, special attention was paid to the quantitative research, followed by the qualitative stage (Creswell, 2011). The research design integrated quantitative and qualitative methods. This research began with the collection and analysis of quantitative data, followed by the collection of qualitative data to explain or deepen the quantitative results. The objective was to present the quantitative results in more detail using qualitative data. After it was found that using VOA videos improved students' listening performance (quantitatively), interviews were conducted to understand why and how effective the media are (qualitatively).

The study implemented a listening comprehension test as the primary instrument for data collection, supplemented by a meticulously designed questionnaire. This dual approach enhanced the reliability and validity of the findings, as noted by Creswell and Clark (2017). The questionnaire focused on specific dimensions of engagement with the Voice of America (VOA) channel, including usage frequency, types of videos viewed, average viewing duration, and total engagement time with the content. The listening comprehension test aimed at assessing students' proficiency in interpreting and comprehending spoken language within the context of VOA videos. This quantitative assessment provided valuable insights into students' perceptions of their experiences with VOA content. To complement these findings, a structured interview technique was utilized to garner richer qualitative data from participants, following a predetermined sequence of questions (Saunders et al., 2019). These interviews allowed for a nuanced exploration of students' interactions with VOA videos and the challenges they faced in the learning process. The application of this mixed-methods approach facilitated a comprehensive analysis, integrating quantitative data with qualitative insights.

The survey component utilized a Likert scale (1 = never, 5 = very often) to gauge students' awareness of the integration of VOA videos in listening instruction. Conducted online via a Google Form, the questionnaire comprised ten targeted questions. The collected data were then inputted into SPSS for analysis, employing Pearson correlation to examine relationships among variables. Concurrently, thematic analysis was applied to the qualitative data derived from interviews and group discussions, emphasizing the coding process necessary for identifying meaningful themes. Themes were identified based on recurrence, relevance, and theoretical significance during the coding process (Guest et al., 2012). This process involved the categorization and organization of the data, facilitating the identification of unique codes through observation and quotations. Ultimately, the methodology encompassed a rigorous review process, allowing for comparison, understanding, and classification of the data, thereby enabling the synthesis of ideas and the identification of significant themes relevant to the study's objectives.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The use of VOA videos had a significant positive relationship with the improvement of students' listening comprehension skills in English courses. This medium not only helped students understand authentic English pronunciation, intonation, and accent variations but also increased their learning motivation through the presentation of interesting and relevant content.

Table 1. Table of survey results

| Likert scale | PARTICIPANT | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Q 1 | Q 2 | Q 3 | Q 4 | Q 5 | Q 6 | Q 7 | Q 8 | Q 9 | Q 10 |
| Strongly Disagree | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Disagree | 1 | 11 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 6 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| Neutral | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Agree | 9 | 1 | 13 | 11 | 14 | 3 | 10 | 10 | 9 | 7 |
| Strongly Agree | 10 | 8 | 6 | 9 | 6 | 11 | 10 | 10 | 11 | 11 |

Table 1 indicates that the use of VOA videos has been shown to be effective in enriching students' vocabulary and improving their understanding of the overall language context. However, there were some challenges that needed to be considered, such as the speed of speaking in the videos and technical terms that were difficult for some students to understand.

Table 2. Table of listening results test

| Participants | Score |
|---|---|
| 1 | 80 |
| 2 | 80 |
| 3 | 90 |
| 4 | 40 |
| 5 | 80 |
| 6 | 60 |
| 7 | 60 |
| 8 | 100 |
| 9 | 80 |
| 10 | 100 |
| 11 | 100 |
| 12 | 100 |
| 13 | 80 |
| 14 | 60 |
| 15 | 70 |
| 16 | 60 |
| 17 | 60 |
| 18 | 20 |
| 19 | 90 |
| 20 | 60 |

Table 2 indicated that, based on the test results, the use of VOA videos proved to have a positive impact on the listening comprehension abilities of students in English courses. The majority of students achieved above-average scores, with a median score of 80, indicating significant improvement in their listening skills. The range of 20 to 100 points reflects the variation in listening abilities among students, which may be influenced by differences in the frequency of VOA video usage and the students' initial level of understanding. Most of the students obtained scores in the range of 60 to 100 points, indicating that this method is effective in improving the abilities of the majority of learners.

Table 3. Pearson correlations

| | | Listening | VOA |
|---|---|---|---|
| Listening | Pearson Correlation | 1 | .108 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | | .651 |
| | N | 20 | 20 |
| VOA | Pearson Correlation | .108 | 1 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .651 | |
| | N | 20 | 20 |

Based on the results of the Pearson correlation test, it is known that the correlation coefficient between Listening and VOA is 0.108. This value indicates a very weak positive correlation between the two variables. A correlation close to zero indicates that the relationship between the two variables is almost non-existent or very weak. Pearson Correlation Coefficient Range:

a. 0.00-0.19 → The relationship is very weak or almost absent.
b. 0.20-0.39 → weak ties.
c. 0.40-0.59 → moderate relationship.
d. 0.60-0.79 → strong relationship.
e. 0.80-1.00 → very strong relationship.

In this case, the value of 0.108 is in the range of 0.00 - 0.19, so the relationship between the two variables is very weak. The p-value, or significance level, is 0.651. Since the p-value (0.651) is greater than 0.05 (5% significance level), this correlation is not statistically significant. The observed relationship between Listening and VOA could have happened by chance and was not strong enough to indicate a real relationship. In other words, increasing or decreasing Listening scores does not consistently affect VOA scores. The number of samples used in this correlation test is 20. With a relatively small sample size, correlation results may be unstable or sensitive to data variations.

To grasp the speaker's message, listening involves an active process where the listener must not only hear but also concentrate. In this study, the researcher highlighted the issue of numerous learners struggling with limited vocabulary due to insufficient focus. Consequently, the researcher employed media to enhance learners' attention and understanding through listening. The selected medium for teaching listening skills in English classes was the *VOA news video*. According to the theory proposed in the generally accepted communication scheme, the listening skill is considered important because effective speaking, a crucial oral language skill, cannot be achieved without proper listening. Listening serves as the foundation for developing speaking abilities, as it enables individuals to understand sounds, words, phrases, and grammatical structures essential for meaningful communication, and this is a task that requires focus. (Alharbi & Al-Ahdal 2022). Utilizing videos in teaching significantly enhances students' listening skills, fostering both their motivation and understanding.

The results of the Pearson correlation test conducted to assess the relationship between Listening and VOA showed a correlation coefficient value of 0.108, which falls into the category of very weak or almost non-existent correlation. This suggests that the relationship between the two variables is not strong enough to indicate a clear pattern. In addition, a p-value of 0.651, which is greater than the significance level of 0.05, indicates that the observed relationship between Listening and VOA is not statistically significant. In other words, this connection most likely happened by chance and cannot be considered evidence of a real relationship.

One important factor to consider in this discussion is the sample size; the number of samples used in this analysis was 20 respondents, which may be considered small for correlation statistical analysis. However, despite this limitation, the study was conducted to provide preliminary insights into the relationship between the variables. The findings can serve

as a foundation for future research with larger sample sizes to validate and expand upon these initial results. Small sample sizes can cause results to be less stable and more susceptible to data variation. Therefore, the results obtained may not be fully representative of the larger population. For future analyses, a larger sample size may improve the validity and reliability of the results. The correlation value of 0.108 falls within the range of 0.00–0.19, indicating a very weak relationship between VOA use and students' listening comprehension. This suggests that changes in listening scores do not consistently impact VOA scores. One possible explanation is that both variables may function independently, or other external factors may play a more significant role in influencing both. A key consideration is the potential impact of student motivation, prior knowledge, and learning strategies on listening comprehension. Students with higher intrinsic motivation or stronger background knowledge in English may perform better in listening tasks regardless of VOA use. Additionally, the effectiveness of VOA videos may depend on how they are integrated into instruction—passive exposure alone may not lead to significant improvements.

Given the very weak and statistically insignificant correlation, the practical implications of this finding are limited. However, this result highlights the need for further investigation into how instructional design, student engagement, and complementary teaching strategies might enhance the effectiveness of VOA materials in improving listening skills. Future research should consider incorporating additional variables, such as learner autonomy, instructional methods, and the frequency of VOA video use, to better understand their role in shaping listening comprehension outcomes. That is, if the goal of the study was to understand or predict VOA based on Listening, then these results indicate that the relationship between the two variables was not strong enough to support that goal.

To enhance future research on the relationship between listening skills and the use of Voice of America (VOA) resources, the following recommendations are proposed.

1. Increase Sample Size
   Conduct studies with larger sample sizes to improve the accuracy and reliability of the results. Larger samples reduce variability and provide more stable estimates of correlation coefficients.
2. Incorporate Additional Variables
   Explore other factors that may influence the relationship between listening skills and VOA usage, such as learners' proficiency levels, motivation, and prior exposure to similar materials. Including these variables can offer a more comprehensive understanding of the dynamics at play.
3. Utilize Diverse Statistical Methods
   Beyond Pearson's correlation, apply various statistical techniques to analyze the data, such as linear regression to assess the predictive relationship between VOA usage and listening skills and determine how changes in one variable may predict changes in the other variables. If the data do not meet the assumptions required for parametric tests, consider using nonparametric alternatives, such as Spearman's rank correlation or Kendall's tau, to evaluate the relationship between variables.

Based on interviews with two respondents who frequently used VOA, it was found that the majority of respondents believe that VOA has a positive effect on improving listening skills. The respondents stated that using VOA provides an interesting learning experience, and helps to improve the ability to listen, speak, and replenish vocabulary. In addition, Voice of America videos are believed to contain useful ideas and knowledge. However, respondents also noted some difficulties in learning to use VOA, such as difficulty in understanding the message or key information conveyed by the speaker and the speed of speech, which sometimes makes

sense. To cope with this, the respondents had to listen to the video several times and concentrate better. Here are excerpts confirming these findings:

***Advantages of using VOA***

This research identified several advantages of learning through VOA based on respondents' experiences.

> *P1: "Highlighted that using VOA was a valuable experience, allowing them to watch videos and acquire knowledge"*. Similarly,
>
> *P2: "Found learning through the VOA website interesting and beneficial, emphasizing its positive impact on students"*.

A key advantage noted by participants was the improvement in listening, speaking, and vocabulary acquisition. P1 specifically mentioned that VOA videos enhanced listening skills, while P2 stated that working with VOA felt like learning at a higher level due to exposure to authentic speech.

***Challenges in using VOA***

Despite its advantages, students also face challenges while using VOA. One of the main difficulties was understanding the speaker's message.

> *P1: "Reported struggling to grasp the main idea and needing to listen multiple times for full comprehension".*
>
> *P2: "Added that the fast pace of the speakers made it difficult to catch the intended meaning, requiring them to listen more attentively".*

These findings suggest that while VOA is an effective tool for developing listening skills, addressing technical issues such as speech speed and comprehension strategies could further optimize its use in language learning.

This research has the same result as Azizah and Sholikhah (2023), who found that the use of VOA in teaching English could be effective. This study is also comparable with Hayati et al. (2022). According to statistical calculations, there is a positive impact between learning listening skills through the VOA Learning English website and learning without the VOA Learning English website. The VOA Learning English website can develop listening skills in English language learners. As a result, VOA videos serve as authentic audio-visual media that can encourage students and challenge them to practice listening. The VOA website consists of a Learning English video that provides an opportunity to improve students' listening skills. Using VOA Learning English as a medium is effective for improving students' listening.

## CONCLUSION

This study explores the relationship between the use of VOA videos and students' level of listening comprehension, which showed a weak correlation, indicating that while VOA videos provide exposure to authentic speech, their impact on listening comprehension improvement is limited. English language courses, with an emphasis on the potential benefits of including a VOA channel in the curriculum. The results provide valuable information to education professionals, teachers, and students, highlighting the role of multimedia resources in improving language learning. For English language teachers, this study highlights the effectiveness of VOA videos as a dynamic learning tool to improve students' listening skills. Teachers can use these videos to develop more interactive and contextually relevant learning strategies that meet the diverse needs of students. By using authentic content, teachers can create a more engaging and meaningful learning environment. For students, VOA videos serve as a motivational resource, offering an introduction to authentic English through a combination of audio and video materials. This not only enhances students' ability to understand different English accents but also helps them understand the context of real conversations. The integration of such content contributes to the development of listening skills, which is crucial

for the overall level of language proficiency of students. For English language courses and educational institutions, this study is a guide to choosing or developing engaging and effective learning materials.

The findings of this study highlight the value of VOA videos in providing students with authentic and practical opportunities to enhance their language skills. They encourage both teachers and students to integrate VOA videos as a strategy to improve listening comprehension, enrich the learning experience, and support academic achievement in English as a Foreign Language (EFL). Despite these contributions, this study has several limitations. The sample size was relatively small, which may affect the generalizability of the findings. Additionally, the study did not account for other potential factors influencing listening comprehension, such as students' prior knowledge, motivation, learning styles, or the frequency and method of VOA video usage. The study also focused solely on listening skills without exploring how VOA videos might contribute to other language competencies like speaking, vocabulary acquisition, or pronunciation. Future research should address these limitations by including larger and more diverse participant groups to increase the validity of the results. Further studies could also examine how different instructional approaches using VOA videos impact language learning and whether their effectiveness varies across proficiency levels. Additionally, researchers may explore the integration of VOA videos in a multimodal learning environment, combining them with interactive tasks, teacher-led discussions, or supplementary learning materials to maximize their benefits. By addressing these aspects, future research can provide a more comprehensive understanding of how multimedia resources like VOA videos can be optimized for language education.

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