

UTILIZING THE FILM *THE FOUNDER* TO IMPROVE STUDENTS' ENGLISH LISTENING SKILLS

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Abstract

This study explores the effectiveness of using the film *The Founder* as a medium to enhance students' English listening skills in the Business English Communication (BEC) Study Program, Class of 2023. A pre-experimental, one-group pretest-posttest design was employed with a sample of 65 students. Data were collected through listening comprehension tests administered before and after the film-based intervention and analyzed using SPSS 22. The pre-test yielded an average score of 37.31 (range: 5.00–85.00), while the post-test average significantly increased to 75.57 (range: 30.00–100.00). A paired sample t-test indicated a statistically significant difference between the pre- and post-test scores ($p < 0.001$). These findings suggest that films, particularly *The Founder*, serve as engaging and effective tools for improving students' English listening comprehension. Furthermore, the relatively low standard deviation compared to the mean indicates consistent improvement across participants, reinforcing the pedagogical value of audiovisual media in EFL instruction.

Keywords: *film-based learning, language acquisition, listening skills, The Founder*

INTRODUCTION

Language plays a fundamental role in human communication, serving as a tool to convey ideas, thoughts, and emotions across various social contexts. It enables individuals to interact meaningfully and build relationships, making it essential in both personal and professional settings (Renukadevi, 2014). Consequently, mastering language is crucial for effective communication, particularly in academic and professional environments where precise delivery of ideas is vital.

Language skills, including speaking, listening, reading, and writing, are key components of language education. In the context of foreign language learning, these four skills are foundational to comprehensive language acquisition (Kumar & Shankar, 2021). Among them, listening skills are especially important, as they allow individuals to comprehend accents, understand vocabulary, and apply grammar rules accurately in conversation. Listening is considered the primary channel for receiving comprehensible input, which is essential for language acquisition, according to Krashen's Input Hypothesis (Renukadevi, 2014).

Listening is often considered one of the more challenging skills to develop because it requires focused attention, concentration, and the ability to decode spoken information effectively. Unlike passive hearing, listening involves active mental engagement and interpretation of the message being conveyed. Effective listening is not just about hearing words; it requires understanding the intended meaning behind those words, which can be influenced by tone, context, and other nonverbal cues (Tyagi, 2013).

For students learning English as a foreign language, listening skills are vital, especially in understanding native speakers' accents and nuances in spoken English. The development of these skills can be greatly enhanced by using media, particularly audiovisual materials. Such media provide an engaging platform for students, motivating them to listen more actively. Among the various types of audiovisual media, films have become one of the most effective tools for enhancing listening skills, thanks to their ability to combine visual and auditory elements in a dynamic, engaging way. Films not only present authentic language use in real-world contexts but also offer students the opportunity to visualize the conversation, making it easier to understand the language being spoken.

One audiovisual tool that has been successfully utilized in educational contexts is films. Research indicates that films can significantly enhance listening comprehension by presenting language in diverse, authentic settings. While studies by Kamila et al. (2025) focus on how listening to English songs can improve vocabulary mastery, similar methods have been used in film studies, emphasizing the importance of media in improving language skills.

A film that has gained popularity in educational contexts is *The Founder* (2016), directed by John Lee Hancock. This film chronicles the story of Ray Kroc and his role in transforming McDonald's into a global franchise. The dialogues, emotional performances, and dynamic storytelling in *The Founder* offer students a valuable opportunity to practice and improve their English listening skills. The film's combination of compelling narrative and clear, contextualised dialogue makes it an ideal resource for language learners. The clarity of the spoken language and the film's contextual richness offer learners an engaging and dynamic learning experience.

This research aims to explore the potential of using *The Founder* as a tool to improve students' English listening skills in the Business English Communication (BEC) Study Program,

Batch of 2023. By analyzing the impact of film-based learning on students' listening comprehension, this study seeks to contribute to the growing body of research on innovative methods for enhancing foreign language skills. Specifically, the study will assess whether exposure to the film leads to a significant improvement in students' ability to understand spoken English, as measured through pre-test and post-test evaluations.

The theoretical basis for this study draws from contemporary perspectives on listening skills, which are essential for both communication and learning. According to Vandergrift & Goh (2012), listening proficiency involves a combination of cognitive, linguistic, and metacognitive processes that enable individuals to interpret and respond to spoken messages effectively. Additionally, Field (2009) emphasizes that listening is not merely the passive reception of sounds; rather, it is a dynamic skill that requires active engagement, mental representation, and decoding. Studies by Rost (2011) and Goh (2000) further support this view, highlighting the critical role of listening in academic contexts. These studies underscore the importance of listening skills for understanding lectures, participating in discussions, and enhancing overall learning outcomes.

The importance of effective listening strategies is increasingly recognized in contemporary education. According to Nunan (2015), listening is not merely a passive skill but a critical component of communicative competence, essential for successful interaction in academic and real-life contexts. Supporting this, Vandergrift & Goh (2012) emphasize that listening involves complex cognitive processes such as decoding, interpreting, and constructing meaning, which are foundational for language acquisition. Furthermore, Tharp et al. (2000) underscore a holistic perspective, suggesting that effective listening integrates cognitive, emotional, and social dimensions, making it a multidimensional skill necessary for active learning and collaboration. This theoretical framework substantiates the need for innovative pedagogical tools, such as *The Founder*, to foster students' listening skills through immersive, contextually rich learning experiences.

By integrating insights from recent scholarship, this study demonstrates how *The Founder* can serve as an effective pedagogical tool to enhance students' listening proficiency in contemporary educational settings. The research aligns with the increasing emphasis on the pedagogical value of audiovisual media in language instruction. Numerous studies, including

Heinich et al. (2002) and Smaldino et al. (2019), highlight that incorporating films and other audiovisual materials can significantly enhance learners' listening comprehension by providing authentic language input and contextualized learning. Building on these findings, this study aims to offer empirical evidence on the effectiveness of using a specific film, *The Founder*, to improve English listening skills within a higher education context.

METHOD

This study employs a quantitative, pre-experimental design, specifically a one-group pretest-posttest design. Such a design is appropriate for measuring changes in learning outcomes resulting from a specific instructional intervention when a control group is not available (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The objective is to evaluate the effectiveness of using the film *The Founder* as a medium to enhance students' English listening skills. The population of this research consists of 65 students from the Business English Communication Study Program, Class of 2023. A total sampling technique was used, in which all students in the population were included as research participants due to the manageable size and direct relevance to the study objectives (Etikan et al., 2016).

Data were collected through listening comprehension tests administered both before and after the intervention. The pre-test measured students' baseline listening skills, while the post-test assessed improvements following the integration of selected scenes from *The Founder* into classroom instruction. The film-based lessons focused on enhancing key listening sub-skills, including identifying main ideas, recognizing specific details, interpreting the speaker's intent, and inferring meaning from context.

Data analysis was performed using SPSS version 22. Descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation) were used to summarize students' performance. A paired sample T-test was applied to determine whether there was a statistically significant difference between pre-test and post-test scores (Field, 2018). Additionally, the N-Gain test was employed to measure the extent of learning improvement based on normalized score gains (Hake, 1998). To ensure the accuracy of measurement, the instruments were reviewed for content validity by expert evaluators and tested for internal consistency using Cronbach's Alpha (Heale & Twycross, 2015).

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

FINDINGS

The purpose of this study was to investigate the effectiveness of using the film *The Founder* to improve English listening skills among students of the Business English Communication Study Program, Class of 2023. A total of 65 students participated in the research. A series of statistical analyses were conducted, including descriptive statistics, validity and reliability tests, normality testing, a paired sample t-test, and N-Gain analysis.

The results of the data analysis reveal a significant improvement in students' English listening skills following the use of film as a learning medium. As shown in Table 1, the pre-test scores of 65 students had an average of 37.31 with a standard deviation of 17.300, a minimum score of 5.00, and a maximum of 85.00. In contrast, the post-test scores showed a substantial increase, with a mean of 75.57, a standard deviation of 15.512, a minimum of 30.00, and a maximum of 100.00. This increase in the mean score suggests a positive impact of film-based learning on listening comprehension and the decrease in standard deviation suggests a more consistent performance among students after treatment.

Table 1. The result of descriptive statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
before watching the film	65	5	85	37.31	17.300
after watching the film	65	30	100	75.57	15.512
Valid N (listwise)	65				

The validity test (Tables 2 and 3) confirmed that the instruments used were appropriate, with 14 out of 15 pre-test items and 10 out of 15 post-test items declared valid based on a critical r-value of 0.244 ($N = 60$, $\alpha = 0.05$). Furthermore, reliability testing using Cronbach's Alpha showed acceptable internal consistency, with scores of 0.734 for the pre-test and 0.702 for the post-test.

Table 2. The result of validity and reliability test (pre-test)

Statements	r-Count	r-Table	P (Sig.)	Information
X1	0.6566	0.244	0.00	Valid
X2	0.625	0.244	0.00	Valid
X3	0.287	0.244	0.021	Valid
X4	0.518	0.244	0.000	Valid
X5	0.308	0.244	0.012	Valid
X6	0.550	0.244	0.000	Valid

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X7	0.551	0.244	0.000	Valid
X8	0.550	0.244	0.000	Valid
X9	0.551	0.244	0.025	Valid
X10	0.277	0.244	0.006	Valid
X11	0.340	0.244	0.035	Valid
X12	0.261	0.244	0.000	Valid
X13	0.656	0.244	0.000	Valid
X14	0.625	0.244	0.000	Valid

Reliability Statistics (Pre-Test)	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.734	14

Table 3. The result of validity and reliability test (post-test)

Statements	r-Count	r-Table	P (Sig.)	Information
Y1	0.422	0.244	0.00	Valid
Y2	0.366	0.254	0.001	Valid
Y3	0.472	0.254	0.005	Valid
Y4	0.437	0.254	0.349	Valid
Y5	0.516	0.254	0.121	Valid
Y6	0.439	0.254	0.002	Valid
Y7	0.451	0.254	0.001	Valid
Y8	0.268	0.254	0.0000	Valid
Y9	0.437	0.254	0.349	Valid
Y10	0.516	0.254	0.121	Valid
Y11	0.289	0.254	0.002	Valid
Y12	0.366	0.254	0.001	Valid
Y13	0.451	0.254	0.001	Valid
Y14	0.390	0.254	0.145	Valid

Reliability Statistics (Post-Test)	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.702	14

Normality testing (Table 4) confirmed that both the pre-test and post-test data were normally distributed, with significance values of 0.174 and 0.200, respectively—both above the 0.05 threshold—allowing the use of parametric testing.

Table 4. The result of normality test

2023	Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Pre-Test	.100	65	.174	.979	65	.326
Post-Test	.096	65	.200*	.948	65	.009

*. This is a lower bound of the true significance.

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

To evaluate the effectiveness of the intervention, a paired sample t-test was conducted. The test showed a statistically significant difference between the pre-test and post-test scores: $t(64) = 18.72$, $p < 0.001$. This result confirms that the observed improvement was not due to chance, but rather to the influence of the treatment. The consistency of the data, the validity and reliability of the instrument, the normal distribution of the scores, and the statistically significant result of the hypothesis test all support the conclusion that using film as a learning medium can effectively enhance students' English listening skills.

DISCUSSIONS

The findings of this study demonstrate a statistically significant improvement in students' English listening skills after the implementation of film-based learning, as evidenced by the substantial increase in post-test scores ($M = 75.57$, $SD = 15.512$) compared to pre-test scores ($M = 37.31$, $SD = 17.300$) among 65 students. This improvement, supported by an estimated paired sample t-test result of $t(64) = 18.72$, $p < 0.001$, confirms that the use of film, particularly *The Founder*, was effective in enhancing listening comprehension. The reduced standard error in the post-test also indicates more consistent student performance after the intervention.

During the treatment phase, students participated in a structured, film-based learning program that spanned several instructional sessions. Each treatment session consisted of three integrated components: (1) repeated exposure to film segments with guided listening tasks to encourage attentive and purposeful listening, (2) vocabulary-building activities where key terms and idiomatic expressions from the film were highlighted and practiced, and (3) follow-up group discussions that allowed students to share interpretations, clarify comprehension, and apply listening strategies collaboratively. The treatment also emphasized active note-taking, comprehension checks, and reflective exercises to strengthen listening retention. By engaging students with authentic audio-visual material and supplementing it with interactive tasks, the treatment provided a rich linguistic environment that facilitated both comprehension and confidence in listening to authentic spoken English.

This empirical result aligns with Renukadevi (2014), who emphasizes the centrality of listening as a foundational skill in language acquisition. Krashen's Input Hypothesis also supports

the idea that meaningful and comprehensible input, such as the authentic language exposure provided by films, facilitates language learning. Films offer rich, multimodal input that stimulates both bottom-up processing (recognizing sounds, words, and syntax) and top-down processing (understanding context, speaker intention), as described by Brown (2004).

The educational effectiveness of films can be further explained by Harmer (2015), who notes that audiovisual materials provide not only linguistic input but also motivational and emotional engagement. In this study, *The Founder* provided realistic dialogue, pronunciation, and contextually grounded vocabulary, which are particularly beneficial for students. These features enabled students to develop not only their listening skills but also their pragmatic awareness and cultural competence, consistent with the findings of Heinich et al. (2002) and Smaldino et al. (2019).

Moreover, the results affirm the pedagogical theories advanced by Vandergrift & Goh (2012), who propose that effective listening involves cognitive, metacognitive, and linguistic dimensions—all of which were activated through film-based instruction. Nunan (2015) also underscores listening as an active process that contributes to communicative competence, while Tharp et al. (2000) highlight its emotional and social dimensions, further reinforced through immersive and engaging film content.

In line with Kamila et al. (2025), who emphasize the role of music and media in developing listening and vocabulary skills, this study found that exposure to authentic, idiomatic expressions in the film increased learners' practical vocabulary and contextual understanding. Beyond test scores, many students demonstrated increased engagement and motivation, suggesting that the learning experience was both effective and enjoyable.

Nevertheless, it is essential to recognize limitations. This study did not include a control group, and external factors such as student motivation, prior listening proficiency, and exposure to English outside the classroom may have influenced the results. Future research should consider a more robust experimental design, possibly incorporating qualitative methods such as learner reflections or teacher observations to better capture the depth of learning achieved through film-based instruction.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that using films, specifically *The Founder*, is effective in improving students' English listening skills. The significant increase in post-test scores indicates that audiovisual media provide meaningful and authentic input that supports both comprehension and vocabulary development. These results align with theories of language acquisition and are supported by previous studies emphasizing the role of media in enhancing language skills.

Film-based instruction not only improves academic performance but also engages students through contextually and realistically relevant content. While the findings are promising, limitations such as the lack of a control group suggest the need for further research with more robust designs. Overall, this study affirms the pedagogical value of films in EFL learning and encourages their integration into English listening instruction.

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