

## USING AUTHENTIC DIGITAL MATERIALS TO DEVELOP LISTENING AND SPEAKING SKILLS OF IT STUDENTS

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### Abstract:

This article examines the use of authentic digital materials in developing listening and speaking skills among IT students. In the modern educational environment, students are surrounded by digital content, including videos, podcasts, interviews, online tutorials, webinars, and professional presentations. These materials can be effectively used in English language teaching to expose students to real pronunciation, natural speech, professional vocabulary, and current topics in technology. The article discusses how authentic digital materials can make English lessons more practical, motivating, and connected to students' future careers. It argues that carefully selected digital materials help students improve listening comprehension, speaking fluency, pronunciation, vocabulary, and confidence. The article concludes that authentic digital materials should be integrated into English classes for IT students as a useful tool for developing real-life communication skills.

**Keywords:** *Authentic digital materials, listening skills, speaking skills, IT students, English language teaching, digital learning, professional communication, higher education.*

### INTRODUCTION

English language learning has become closely connected with digital communication. Today, students use online videos, podcasts, social media, educational platforms, and digital tools in their everyday lives. For IT students, this connection is even stronger because their academic and professional field is directly related to technology. Many useful resources in programming, cyber security, artificial intelligence, software development, and digital innovation are available in English.

For this reason, English classes for IT students should include materials that reflect real language use in digital and professional environments. Traditional textbook dialogues are useful for basic learning, but they do not always prepare students for understanding natural English speech. In real life, people speak at different speeds, use various accents, shorten expressions, and include professional terminology. Authentic digital materials help students become familiar with this type of language.

Authentic materials are materials created for real communication, not only for classroom instruction. In English lessons, these may include YouTube tutorials, TED Talks, technology podcasts, interviews with IT specialists, product presentations, software demonstration videos, online lectures, and cyber security awareness videos. Such materials expose students to natural language and help them understand how English is used outside the classroom.

Listening is one of the most challenging skills for many EFL students. Learners may understand written English, but they often struggle when listening to native or fluent speakers. They may find it difficult to follow pronunciation, speed, connected speech, or unfamiliar vocabulary. Authentic digital materials can help students improve listening skills gradually because they provide repeated exposure to real English.

According to Field, listening should not be treated as a passive skill, because learners actively process sounds, words, meanings, and context while listening [2]. Therefore, listening tasks should help students develop strategies such as predicting content, identifying key words, understanding main ideas, and recognizing details. Authentic digital materials are useful for this purpose because they provide rich and realistic input.

Speaking skills can also be developed through digital materials. After watching a video or listening to a podcast, students can discuss the topic, summarize the content, express opinions, ask questions, or prepare short presentations. In this way, listening becomes connected with speaking. Students do not only receive information; they respond to it and use English actively.

For IT students, authentic digital materials are especially useful because they can be selected according to their professional interests. For example, students may watch a short video about artificial intelligence, listen to a podcast on cyber security risks, or analyze a product presentation about a new application. These topics are more motivating than general textbook topics because they are connected with students' field of study.

The use of authentic digital materials also supports vocabulary development. Students encounter technical and semi-technical terms in real contexts. Words such as software, database, algorithm, privacy, cyber attack, interface, automation, cloud computing, and user experience become easier to understand when students hear them in meaningful situations.

However, teachers need to select digital materials carefully. If the material is too difficult, students may feel discouraged. If it is too long, they may lose concentration. Therefore, short and focused materials are often more effective. A two-minute technology video or a short podcast extract can be more useful than a long lecture. The teacher should consider students' level, lesson objectives, vocabulary difficulty, speech speed, and topic relevance.

A practical lesson using authentic digital material can include three stages: pre-listening, while-listening, and post-listening. In the pre-listening stage, the teacher introduces the topic, explains key vocabulary, and asks prediction questions. In the while-listening stage, students watch or listen for the main idea, specific details, or key terms. In the post-listening stage, students discuss the content, summarize it, role-play a related situation, or give their own opinion.

For example, in a lesson about online privacy, students may first discuss what personal data means. Then they watch a short video explaining how websites collect user information. After that, students answer comprehension questions and discuss how users can protect their privacy. Finally, they prepare short advice for ordinary internet users. This type of lesson develops listening, speaking, vocabulary, and critical thinking at the same time.

Digital materials can also increase learner autonomy. Students can continue learning outside the classroom by watching English technology videos, listening to podcasts, or following professional channels. Teachers can guide students by recommending suitable sources and asking them to keep short listening notes. This helps students develop independent learning habits.

Another advantage of authentic digital materials is exposure to different accents and speaking styles. In professional IT environments, students may communicate with people from different countries. They need to understand not only one standard accent but also various forms of international English. Digital materials provide useful exposure to this diversity.

At the same time, technology should be used with a clear educational purpose. Simply showing a video in class is not enough. The teacher should design meaningful tasks before, during, and after the material. When digital content is connected with clear learning objectives, it becomes a powerful tool for language development.

In institutions such as Cyber University, authentic digital materials are highly relevant because students are preparing for technology-related careers. English instruction should reflect the communication needs of the digital world. By using professional and realistic materials, teachers can help students become more confident listeners and speakers of English.

### **CONCLUSION**

In conclusion, authentic digital materials can play an important role in developing listening and speaking skills among IT students. These materials expose learners to real English, professional vocabulary, natural pronunciation, and current topics connected with technology.

The use of videos, podcasts, interviews, tutorials, and online presentations can make English lessons more engaging and practical. When properly selected and supported by clear classroom tasks, authentic digital materials help students improve listening comprehension, speaking fluency, vocabulary knowledge, pronunciation, and confidence.

The article concludes that English instructors should integrate authentic digital materials into lessons for IT students. Such materials help connect classroom learning with real digital communication and prepare students for academic and professional interaction in English.

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