

Teacher's Perception Of Using Short Story Videos To Motivate Non-English Major Students To Learn English Listening

Le Tuyet Trinh
Dong Nai University

Abstract

The principle aim of this paper is to explore teachers' perceptions of using short story videos as a tool to motivate non-English major students in developing their English listening skills at Dong Nai University. It investigates the effectiveness of integrating multimedia storytelling into language learning and examines the motivational benefits for students often disengaged in traditional classroom settings. In this paper, the investigator adopted qualitative approach to analyze the individual structured interviews with 3 Vietnamese EFL teachers teaching in Dong Nai university, highlighting how visual narratives enhance comprehension, engagement, and listening proficiency. The findings suggest that short story videos or storytelling-based method provide a dynamic and accessible medium for language acquisition, fostering a positive learning environment while addressing non-English major students' diverse needs. Additionally, this paper underscores the importance of leveraging audiovisual content to bridge the gap between language theory and practical communication skills.

Keywords: short story videos, storytelling, motivation, listening skill.

Date of Submission: 29-02-2025

Date of Acceptance: 09-03-2025

I. Introduction

Despite the growing importance of English as a global communication tool, listening remains one of the most neglected aspects of language instruction. Learning English listening skills has long been a challenge for students in most Vietnamese universities, especially for non-English major students. The application of traditional teaching methods often prioritize grammar and reading comprehension over interactive and practical skills like listening. As a result, university students struggle to develop the ability to comprehend spoken English in real-life contexts. Compounding the issue are outdated materials, limited exposure to authentic audio resources, and a lack of opportunities to interact with native or fluent English speakers. Furthermore, students often experience low confidence and motivation, exacerbated by an examination-oriented system that emphasizes rote learning over practical application. Addressing these challenges is crucial to better prepare Vietnamese students for the demands of global communication and integration.

Therefore, the current research aims to investigate the perceptions of English lecturers who are teaching non-English major students at Dong Nai university after using short story videos in teaching Basic English courses to motivate their students to learn listening effectively.

Research questions:

1. What impact do short story videos have on motivating students to learn English listening from the teachers' perspective?
2. What are teachers' views on the advantages and disadvantages of using digital game-based learning methods to motivate students to learn English listening?

II. Literature Review

Benefits of Using Short Story Videos in Teaching Listening

The integration of short story videos into English language teaching has emerged as a pedagogical strategy to enhance listening skills, particularly for non-English major students who may lack intrinsic motivation or exposure to authentic language contexts. Research underscores the efficacy of multimedia tools in language acquisition, as they align with Mayer's (2009) multimedia learning theory, which posits that combining visual and auditory stimuli fosters deeper cognitive processing and retention. Short story videos, which embed narrative coherence with contextual cues (e.g., gestures, settings, and emotions), provide learners with multimodal input that aids in decoding meaning, a principle supported by Paivio's (1986) dual-coding theory.

Empirical studies highlight the benefits of video-based materials for listening comprehension. Sydorenko (2010) found that videos improve pragmatic and linguistic understanding by exposing learners to paralinguistic features such as intonation and facial expressions, which are critical for interpreting implied meanings. Similarly, Sherman's (2003) work on authentic video use in classrooms demonstrated that narrative-driven content, such as short stories, increases engagement and reduces anxiety among learners by situating language within relatable, emotionally resonant contexts. This aligns with Krashen's (1982) concept of comprehensible input, where learners acquire language more effectively when exposed to material that is slightly above their current proficiency level but scaffolded through contextual support.

Challenges of Short Story Videos in Teaching Listening

While short story videos provide rich multimodal information for developing listening skills, their implementation poses a number of pedagogical challenges. Cognitive overload, a concern highlighted in Sweller's (1988) cognitive load theory, arises when learners struggle to process auditory, visual, and narrative information simultaneously, potentially distracting from language objectives (Mayer, 2009). Sydorenko's (2010) study of video-based pragmatics instruction notes that the fast pace of speech and complex plots in short stories can overwhelm learners, especially those with lower proficiency levels. Additionally, cultural or contextual inadequacies in video content can impede comprehension, as unfamiliar contexts or idiomatic language require additional explanation (Alonso Pérez, 2020; Sherman, 2003). Scholars such as Van Merriënboer and Sweller (2005) emphasize the need for supports, such as pre-teaching vocabulary or segmented videos, to mitigate these problems. Without intentional instructional design, the very features that make short story videos so engaging—the vivid imagery and depth of the story—risk becoming barriers to effective listening practice.

III. Method

Setting and research participants

The participants of this study include three experienced lecturers from Dong Nai University, each specializing in teaching English to non-English major students. With from three to five years of teaching experience, these lecturers have consistently incorporated short videos into their English listening lessons as part of their instructional strategies. Their innovative approach aims to enhance student engagement and listening comprehension by using multimedia resources to provide authentic and contextualized language input. Their perspectives and experiences offer valuable insights into the effectiveness of short video integration in English language education.

Research instrument and data collection

The semi-structured interviews were conducted face-to-face individually with each participant. Interview data would be analyzed based on lecturers' responses to the interview questions. A list of 4 open-ended questions were used during the interviews as a list below:

1. What are some benefits of using short story videos to motivate students in developing their listening skills?
2. Have you encountered any challenges or difficulties when using short story videos in your teaching? If so, how have you addressed them?
3. How do your students respond to the use of short story videos in class? Have you noticed any changes in their motivation or listening performance?
4. What factors do you consider when selecting short story videos for your lessons, and how do you ensure they meet your students' needs and proficiency levels?

This qualitative study explored lecturers' views on the advantages and challenges of using short story videos in listening lessons and examined how this method influences the motivation of non-English major students in the classroom. The collected data will be analyzed in relation to the existing literature. Furthermore, the study will offer inferences and recommendations derived from its findings.

IV. Findings And Discussion

Challenges of using short story videos in listening lessons

To answer my questions about the obstacles, the three lecturers reported that both teachers and students in Dong Nai University may face several difficulties when applying storytelling-based learning method in listening lessons, especially for non-English major students. For example, a lecturer reported that before the lessons, she had difficulty selecting stories with appropriate content that matches students' language proficiency, cultural context, and learning objectives can be difficult, particularly when suitable pacing or vocabulary is required for beginner or intermediate learners. Additionally, the others said that technical issues, such as inadequate multimedia equipment, limited access to devices or unstable internet connections in the classroom often hinder effective implementation. Time constraints is also a problem that lecturers have to consider when they decide to apply storytelling-based method in the class as it takes time to design and prepare both pre- and

post- activities related to the story, which may conflict with the curriculum requirements or time limitation in the classroom. Besides, after applying storytelling-based teaching method to teach English listening for years, they noticed that students often struggle with comprehension because some stories may have complex plots and themes that are difficult for students to keep up with, also they were unfamiliar to accent of the narrators or characters in the video, native speakers often speak in fast speed, or use idiomatic expressions, slangs or complex vocabulary in videos, this leads to a feeling of frustration if they do not understand the plot of the story, then they will not want to listen and follow the story anymore. Furthermore, some students may view videos as entertainment rather than a learning tool, leading to reduced focus, while overreliance on subtitles can hinder the development of listening skills. Lecturers agree that using short story videos to teach listening skills often requires careful planning, understanding students' background knowledge and needs, and being flexible in the teaching process to motivate students to listen and achieve lesson objectives effectively.

Benefits of using short story videos in listening lessons

Using short story videos in listening lessons offers numerous advantages for both lecturers and students. A lecturer mentioned video stories are notably more engaging for students compared to traditional academic audio materials, as they present captivating narratives with intriguing plots. Additionally, videos often incorporate unique communication concepts and language nuances that may not be covered in the standard curriculum. These videos combine visual and auditory elements, providing learners with contextualized language input that aids comprehension and retention. They expose students to authentic speech patterns, diverse accents, and real-world scenarios, making listening practice more relevant and engaging. The narrative structure of short stories captures students' attention, fostering motivation and sustained interest in the lesson. Additionally, the visual cues in videos support understanding by complementing spoken language, reducing the cognitive load for learners, particularly those at lower proficiency levels. Besides, the others agreed that short story videos also create opportunities for interactive learning through pre- and post-viewing activities, encouraging students to actively participate and apply their listening skills. Furthermore, they help develop cultural awareness by introducing students to various contexts and perspectives, enriching their overall language learning experience. From teachers' perspectives, using short story videos in listening lessons provides significant advantages for enhancing student engagement and comprehension. Teachers find that the combination of visual and auditory elements in videos helps bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application, making abstract concepts more accessible to learners. The engaging narratives of short stories capture students' attention, fostering intrinsic motivation and encouraging active participation in listening activities. Teachers also appreciate that these videos expose students to authentic language use, including natural speech patterns, diverse accents, and real-world scenarios, which are often absent in traditional audio materials. Additionally, the visual context provided by videos supports students in decoding meaning, even when encountering unfamiliar vocabulary or expressions. This enables teachers to introduce more complex language structures gradually. Furthermore, short story videos facilitate creative lesson planning, allowing teachers to incorporate a variety of pre- and post-listening activities that reinforce comprehension and critical thinking. From a pedagogical standpoint, teachers value the versatility of short story videos as a tool to cater to mixed proficiency levels and to address diverse learning needs effectively.

Moreover, these lecturers emphasized that short story videos are an excellent tool for making English listening practice more engaging and less daunting for non-English major students. Traditional audio exercises often feel monotonous or irrelevant to real-life situations, but the narrative and visual components of short story videos grab students' attention and maintain their motivation. By offering a clear context for the language being used, the videos help students grasp unfamiliar words and phrases through visual cues and actions, easing the pressure of listening comprehension and boosting their confidence. Furthermore, the authentic accents and natural speech patterns featured in the videos equip students for real-world communication, making the learning process more practical and applicable. Non-English major students, who may not focus heavily on English in their academic pursuits, find video-based lessons entertaining and interactive, transforming listening practice from a tedious task into an enjoyable activity. The variety of themes and characters in short stories also enables students to connect with the content, fostering a sense of relatability and cultural understanding that further enhances their enthusiasm for learning.

Discussion

The three educators in this study found that formulaic dialogues or audio clips taken out of context were difficult to engage learners. The inclusion of short video stories in English listening lessons for non-English majors is a potential approach to address the common challenges that most teachers face in engaging learners during the learning process. Short video stories harness the power of multimedia to create a learning environment that is intuitive, stimulating, and low-pressure. This pedagogical shift aligns with teachers' goals of promoting both language competence and learner motivation, especially for students who lack intrinsic interest in language acquisition.

Practicing listening to English through story videos brings many practical benefits to non-language major students, especially in developing comprehensive language skills. First, this method helps improve the ability to listen to information through emotions followed by a variety of rhythms, speaking speeds, and natural language speeds, which are often lacking in traditional textbooks. When watching story videos, learners not only absorb vocabulary in specific contexts, which helps them remember it longer, but also learn how to use idioms and real-life conversational phrases, thereby expanding their vocabulary naturally. In addition, the vivid storylines and illustrations facilitate access to local culture, thereby improving understanding of social contexts, customs, and ways of thinking in English. This factor is especially important for non-language major students, who have few opportunities to experience real-life language environments. Moreover, the entertainment of video stories stimulates learning interest, helping learners maintain the habit of regular listening practice without feeling pressured. The result of the integration of sound and image also supports beginners to speculate the content, enhancing the ability to automatically communicate in the next communication. Therefore, this method not only improves skills but also contributes to building an interface language foundation, suitable for the practical application goals of non-professional student members.

However, teachers acknowledge challenges in implementation. Curating appropriate content is time-intensive, as videos must balance linguistic accessibility with thematic relevance. Educators also caution against over-reliance on subtitles, which can divert attention from auditory processing. To address this, many teachers employ scaffolded activities, such as pre-teaching key vocabulary, conducting “predictive listening” tasks before viewing, or using post-viewing discussions to reinforce comprehension.

Instructors also highlight the importance of learner autonomy in maximizing motivation. Allowing students to choose videos based on personal interests (e.g., technology, travel, or sports) aligns with self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985), which posits that autonomy enhances engagement.

V. Conclusion

The use of short story videos in teaching English listening offers numerous benefits, including enhanced engagement, contextualized language input, and improved comprehension. While challenges such as video selection and technical limitations exist, the overall effectiveness of this approach underscores its potential as a valuable tool in language education. Future research should focus on developing strategies to address these challenges and further explore the role of short story videos in diverse learning environments. In conclusion, teachers perceive short video stories as a transformative tool that merges pedagogical efficacy with motivational appeal. By addressing cognitive, emotional, and cultural dimensions of learning, videos mitigate the intimidation of listening practice while nurturing skills applicable beyond the classroom. Successful implementation, however, hinges on thoughtful curation, scaffolding, and fostering student agency. Future research from teachers' perspectives could explore longitudinal impacts on proficiency, the role of genre diversity (e.g., documentaries vs. fictional stories), and strategies to balance entertainment with academic rigor. Ultimately, as one educator noted, “When students forget they’re ‘practicing English’ and instead focus on the story, we’ve already won half the battle.”

References

- [1] Alonso Pérez, R. (2020). Using Audiovisual Comprehension To Enhance Language Learning. *Journal Of Language Teaching And Research*, 11(3), 345–354.
- [2] Deci, E. L., & Ryan, R. M. (1985). *Intrinsic Motivation And Self-Determination In Human Behavior*. Springer.
- [3] Green, M. C., & Brock, T. C. (2000). The Role Of Transportation In The Persuasiveness Of Public Narratives. *Journal Of Personality And Social Psychology*, 79(5), 701–721.
- [4] Krashen, S. D. (1982). *Principles And Practice In Second Language Acquisition*. Pergamon Press.
- [5] Mayer, R. E. (2009). *Multimedia Learning (2nd Ed.)*. Cambridge University Press.
- [6] Paivio, A. (1986). *Mental Representations: A Dual Coding Approach*. Oxford University Press.
- [7] Sherman, J. (2003). *Using Authentic Video In The Language Classroom*. Cambridge University Press.
- [8] Sydorenko, T. (2010). The Use Of Input Videos In Teaching Pragmatics. *System*, 38(2), 236–244. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2010.03.017>
- [9] Sweller, J. (1988). Cognitive Load During Problem Solving: Effects On Learning. *Cognitive Science*, 12(2), 257–285.
- [10] Sydorenko, T. (2010). The Use Of Input Videos In Teaching Pragmatics. *System*, 38(2), 236–244.
- [11] Van Merriënboer, J. J. G., & Sweller, J. (2005). Cognitive Load Theory And Complex Learning. *Educational Psychology Review*, 17(2), 147–177.