

Nhận thức của sinh viên chuyên ngữ về việc sử dụng các bài tập luyện nghe dựa trên Sitcom “Friends” của Mỹ để tự học

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TÓM TẮT

Bài báo này trình bày kết quả nghiên cứu về nhận thức của sinh viên về việc sử dụng các bài tập luyện nghe được thiết kế từ hài kịch tình huống “Friends” của Mỹ để tự luyện tập kỹ năng nghe. Tổng cộng 54 sinh viên năm hai chuyên ngành Sư phạm tiếng Anh tại Trường Đại học Quy Nhơn đã tham gia vào nghiên cứu. Nghiên cứu này sử dụng bảng câu hỏi khảo sát và phỏng vấn để tìm hiểu nhận thức của sinh viên học tiếng Anh như một ngoại ngữ về các dạng bài tập được thiết kế dựa trên “Friends” và đánh giá của sinh viên về lợi ích thực tế mà bộ tài liệu gồm các hoạt động luyện Nghe mang lại cho họ. Theo đánh giá của nhóm sinh viên tham gia thử nghiệm, việc sử dụng hài kịch tình huống không chỉ giúp họ nâng cao kỹ năng Nghe mà còn tạo cơ hội cho họ tiếp cận một nền văn hóa nước ngoài, tăng cường đáng kể khả năng tự học và động lực học ngôn ngữ.

Từ khóa: *Hài kịch tình huống “Friends” của Mỹ, kỹ năng nghe, sinh viên chuyên ngành Sư phạm tiếng Anh, nhận thức, năng lực tự học.*

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English majors' perceptions on using listening tasks based on the American sitcom "Friends" for self-study

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ABSTRACT

This article presents the results of a study on English majors' perceptions of the use of listening tasks designed based on the American sitcom "Friends" for self-study. A total of 54 second-year undergraduates majoring in English Language Teaching (ELT) at Quy Nhon University were involved in the study. The study employed survey questionnaires and interviews to discover EFL students' perceptions about the kinds of listening activities designed based on "Friends" and whether this set of sitcom-based listening activities was of practical use to them. According to the participants' perceptions, using sitcoms not only helps them enhance their listening abilities but also exposes them to a foreign culture, substantially improve their autonomy and motivation for language learning.

Keywords: *American sitcom "Friends", listening skills, ELT majors, perceptions, learner autonomy.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Authentic texts used in education come in a variety of shapes and sizes, from works of literature, information featured in the broadcasting media, newspapers to movies. One of the sources that is believed to be the most stimulating is movies. In addition to linguistic features like the articulation of speech sounds, there are paralinguistic features, such as facial expressions, eye-contact and gestures, which will support viewers in interpreting and making inferences about the meaning of dialogues. Furthermore, people benefit tremendously from coming into contact with real-world contexts in which specific words or grammar points are used through different forms of imagery. Moreover, students will benefit from being

introduced to various tones of voice, accent and dialect as this could prepare them to converse effectively with people with various accents and dialects. As for the cultural information that is delivered, it ranges from the explicit - values and ideologies - to the perceptible, how people move, communicate and interact within a community (Pulverness¹). Stempleski² and Lin³ have commented that movies that exploit topics that draw on the learners' interest could act as a precursor in enhancing their motivation to acquire language.

There are a vast number of movie genres, from action, thriller to comedy. Comedy is further divided into romantic comedy and situation comedy. Situation comedy, or sitcom, is typically a half-hour television series

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segmented into episodes with many seasons. All episodes feature the same central characters in an unchanged setting and these characters are presented with a new, unexpected comic situation (Sherman⁴). The ability to arouse laughter is the distinguishing feature of sitcoms and, as Sherman has stated, “what makes people laugh often has to do with ‘in-knowledge’, with making quick connections and coming close to sensitive issues.”

Sitcoms broach taboos in a gentle but powerful manner, attracting the attention of the audience and encouraging deep thoughts on the matter. Not only do they raise people’s awareness of current controversial issues like gender identity or embezzlement but they also suggest plausible solutions to them. Sitcoms have always been an irreplaceable part of everyday life as they mirror society, reflect social changes, provide a source of entertainment and are associated with popular culture, hence could produce indelible impressions on the mind of young people. This means of language attainment can generate a sense of achievement that is attached to the exposure of authentic language and the challenges that it comes packaged with. (Berman⁵, Taflinger⁶)

Several researchers have made serious attempts to investigate the use of English sitcoms in a foreign language classroom. Ulusoy and Demirebilek⁷ randomly chose 55 10th grade students in Isparta Anatolian Teachers’ Training High School (Turkey) and divided them into two groups, the control group and the experimental group, with only the second group getting to watch the American detective sitcom ‘Monks’ in eight weeks and practiced related communicative activities. At the end of the research, the speaking abilities of the students who were exposed to authentic materials saw an acceleration of nearly 50%, while that of their counterpart was a mere 13.33%. The pupils also gave exceptionally positive responses in the interview, for instance, “I find myself closer to English”, “I love English more”, and “We saw the daily lives of the characters in the episodes

of Monks [?] and witnessed American culture a little bit”.

Another study carried out by Waedaoh and Sinwongsuwat,⁸ consisted of 42 high school students partaking in an English for Communication course at a public institution in Southern Thailand. The participants were given instruction on the methods to establish everyday dialogues. Statistical results after 15 weeks showed that evaluating naturally-occurring conversations with the aid of authentic materials such as sitcoms could be the key to improving learners’ communicative capabilities, from vocabulary and grammar to fluency and intonation.

More recent research was carried out by Konus,⁹ which focused on using sitcoms in the English as a foreign language or second language classroom. In the handbook, she presented both the significant advantages and the possible limitations that teachers and learners of English may encounter when making full use of this mean. For this project, the author focused on the American sitcom “Friends” and established a sample lesson plan based on episode one “The one where Monica gets a new roommate”, season one. It offered a wide variety of activities for the four skills of listening, writing, speaking, reading that learners can perform before watching, during watching and after watching the sitcom. She strongly believed that there was an apparent need for a more engaging, motivating and culturally enriching language learning technique which could replace the rigid conventional approaches and that sitcoms were undeniable one promising candidate.

These brief reviews show what sitcoms are and their importance as an authentic learning material in improving the learners’ language skills. A study about English majors’ perceptions of their use for self-study on listening tasks that could be designed based on the American sitcom “Friends”, therefore, could be of great significance, but seems to be untouched in Quy Nhon University setting. As a result, this study will focus on this particular area,

seeking to answer the question “How much are English majors interested in these sitcom-based activities?”.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1. Participants

A total of 54 second-year ELT students at Quy Nhon University were randomly chosen for this study. In our opinion, as sophomores, their background knowledge would be sufficient enough to perform independent study without a lot of difficulties. We had hoped that they would be fascinated by the idea of using authentic materials, specifically sitcoms, as an alternative resource to the conventional listening tasks available in textbooks, which may have failed to stimulate their interest.

2.2. Study design

2.2.1. Data collection instruments

In our study, we combined both quantitative and qualitative methods to analyze the results of our survey. The instruments used in this study consisted of a survey (quantitative method) and a semi-structured interview (qualitative method).

The survey contained 20 five-point Likert scale items (on a scale of 1-5, ranging from Not at all Agree = 1 to Strongly Agree = 5). It was divided into two parts. The first part included seven statements concerning the participants' perception of learning English in terms of motivation, learner autonomy and the use of authentic materials to improve listening. The second part, which had 13 statements centering on the two research questions, aimed to investigate the participants' perceptions after using the set of activities based on the sitcom “Friends”.

The semi-structured interview was carried out with a list of eight open-ended questions that explored further the aspects that were mentioned in the survey. In addition, we asked the participants about their thoughts on how we could improve the quality and appearance of the activities. The questions used in the semi-structured interviews were about: (1) the frequency at which the

participants practiced listening on their own; (2) the kinds of materials they used to practice listening; (3) their thoughts on using sitcoms, specifically the American sitcom “Friends” as a resource for listening practice; (4) the degree to which they relate to the topics discussed in “Friends”; (5) their perceptions of the way we designed the activities in terms of content and presentation; (6) the aspects of the activities we could improve on; (7) the ways in which our set of activities benefited them and (8) their attitude towards practicing English listening after trying our activities.

2.2.2. Data collection procedures

The research team invited 60 students majoring in English Language Teaching in their sophomore year at Quy Nhon University to join an online meeting through Google meet. In the session, we described the aims and objectives as well as giving detailed explanations of how we intended to conduct this study. 54 out of 60 students expressed genuine enthusiasm with the topic of using sitcoms as a means to practice listening and volunteered to take part in our research. We sent them the code to our Google Classroom (ncg5mqm), where we posted links of listening activities grouped according to topic for them to complete. Every time a participant finished a task, his/her results were sent directly back to us through Azota or Google Form, the two online platforms that we utilized to upload our exercises. After one month, the majority of the experimenters accomplished around 50 - 70% of each topic, with the exception of Topic 1: Accommodation, whose figure was 100%. After that, the students were asked to fulfill a questionnaire and take part in a semi-structured interview as follows: Firstly, all 54 participants were required to complete the survey online through Google Forms. Next, five random participants were sent an invitation to take part in a semi-structured interview via emails, Messenger, and Zalo. Due to the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic, the interviews could not be carried out offline; instead, they were conducted on Google Meet, an online meeting platform. However, this inconvenience turned

out to be perk in our data-gathering process as the participants felt more at ease when conversing through a digital screen. Each interview lasted about 15 - 20 minutes, depending on the individual.

2.3. Data analysis

The questionnaires were collected and the data was inputted into Microsoft Excel to calculate the mean for each item. The percentages of participants who chose options from 1 to 5 for individual items were already automatically calculated on Google Form so the research group did not have to use Microsoft Excel to process the data. The output from the computer were then summarized and demonstrated through tables. Additionally, we sorted the notes that

we wrote down during the interviews, selected the main ideas, and categorized the participants' answers into two key segments: the participants' perceptions on language learning, listening skills and authentic learning materials and their opinions of the set of activities designed based on this sitcom.

3. FINDINGS

3.1. Results of the questionnaire

3.1.1. Learning English and listening learning materials

Table 1 provides interesting insights into the randomly selected sophomores' views of their language learning and their favourite kinds of materials.

Table 1. Participants' perceptions on learning English and listening learning materials.

Item	Statements	Mean	Percentage				
			1	2	3	4	5
1.1	I am an independent English learner.	3.33	7.4%	18.5%	18.5%	44.4%	11.1%
1.2	I have clear purposes for learning English.	4.00	3.7%	3.7%	18.5%	37%	37%
1.3	I think getting high grades is the most important thing when learning English.	3.56	0%	11.1%	33.3%	44.4%	11.1%
1.4	My main goal is to be able to use English to communicate.	4.52	0%	3.7%	3.7%	29.6%	63%
1.5	I often try to improve my listening skill after class.	3.56	0%	14.8%	33.3%	33.3%	18.5%
1.6	I like using academic textbooks to practice listening.	3.59	3.7%	7.4%	33.3%	37%	18.5%
1.7	I like using authentic materials such as songs, films, etc. to practice listening.	4.15	0%	3.7%	22.2%	29.6%	44.4%

1 = Strongly Disagree 2 = Somewhat Disagree 3 = Neutral 4 = Somewhat Agree 5 = Strongly Agree

The first four items revolve around learner autonomy and motivation, extremely important elements that all English learners should possess in order to achieve language proficiency (Cotterall,¹³ Krashen¹⁴). As can be observed from Table 1, nearly half of the students choose option 4 for item 1.1. This clarifies our previous assumptions that the group of English-majored sophomores were capable of performing independent study without relying

too heavily on their teachers; thus, they were suitable for testing our listening activities to improve their listening comprehension after class. Seventy four percent of the participants chose option 4 or 5 for item 1.2, which means that a large number of them had clear reasons for learning English. When it came to the goals that they wished to achieve when striving to do well in language learning, we asked them to determine the level of importance between two

disparate goals: achieving academic success (item 1.3) and being able to communicate in English (item 1.4). The options that received the most picks are 4 for the former goal and 5 for the latter. It is also noticeable that the mean score for item 1.4 is 4.52, which is the highest value in this category. We may be able to affirm that upon reaching tertiary education, the need to use English as a means of communication becomes more apparent than ever before.

The remaining three items in the table focus on the listening skill. The mean score for the statement “I often try to improve my listening skill after class” is recorded at 3.56, showing that the undergraduates did make an effort to practice this skill outside the classroom.

Regarding the sources that they liked using to improve this ability, there is a difference between the mean scores for academic textbooks and authentic materials (3.59 and 4.15 respectively). From these numbers, it is quite obvious that the subjects preferred to utilize listening authentic resources such as films and songs.

3.1.2. Using the set of activities based on the sitcom “Friends”

Table 2 reveals the amount of interest the participants had for the set of listening activities and whether they deemed the exercises suitable for their individual learning needs and goals. This part aims to answer the research question “How much are English majors interested in these sitcom-based activities?”

Table 2. Participants’ perceptions of the set of activities designed based on sitcom “Friends”.

Item	Statements	Mean	Percentage				
			1	2	3	4	5
2.1	I like the way the exercises are presented.	3.52	0%	3.7%	55.6%	25.9%	14.8%
2.2	I think there could be some improvements to the presentation.	2.96	0%	29.6%	55.6%	11.1%	3.7%
2.3	I think the instructions for the exercises are clear.	3.96	0%	7.4%	22.2%	37%	33.3%
2.4	I think the length of each exercise is reasonable.	3.85	0%	3.7%	37%	29.6%	29.6%
2.5	I think the vocabulary level used in the exercises is suitable for a second-year English major.	3.96	0%	0%	29.6%	44.4%	25.9%
2.6	I think the topics are relevant to young people.	4.07	0%	0%	22.2%	48.1%	29.6%
2.7	I think the videos and audios in the exercises are of good quality (video resolution, sound quality, etc.).	3.93	0%	3.7%	22.2%	51.9%	22.2%
2.8	I could understand most of what the characters in the sitcom are saying.	3.78	0%	3.7%	33.3%	44.4%	18.5%
2.9	I understand more about American culture after doing the exercises.	3.63	3.7%	3.7%	37%	37%	18.5%
2.10	I know more slangs and informal words and how to use them in different situations.	3.67	0%	7.4%	33.3%	44.4%	14.8%
2.11	I think “Friends” can be used for language learning, especially for self-study.	3.96	0%	0%	33.3%	37%	29.6%
2.12	I feel more motivated to practice my listening skills.	3.81	0%	0%	40.7%	37%	22.2%
2.13	Overall, I am satisfied with this set of activities.	3.78	0%	3.7%	33.3%	44.4%	18.5%
2.14	I would recommend this set of activities to other people.	3.93	0%	0%	40.7%	25.9%	33.3%

1=Strongly Disagree 2=Somewhat Disagree 3=Neutral 4=Somewhat Agree 5=Strongly Agree

We first investigated their thoughts on the way we presented our material (item 2.1 and item 2.2). On the whole, the majority of the participants remained neutral of the presentation style (55.6% chose option 3 for both items). For the first item, 40.7% ticked options 4 and 5, which was a sign that a large proportion approved of the appearance of each activity. However, 14.8% expressed that there were still room for improvements; the suggested amendments will be discussed later on in this article.

The items from 2.3 to 2.8 address the content of the activities: the explicitness of their instructions, their length, the vocabulary that was incorporated into them, their topics and the quality of the clips that were extracted from the sitcom. The mean score for item 2.3 is 3.96, which illustrates that the participants had little difficulty in understanding the instructions for each activity in spite of the fact that some of them had unconventional formats. This can be attributed to the examples that we had included so as to give the learners an idea of what they were expected to do. Learners may be discouraged by lengthy pieces of input accompanied by long lists of listening comprehension questions. Therefore, we aimed to make the exercises as concise as possible so that students could still make time to practice their listening even if their schedules are hectic. Based on the figures recorded for item 2.4, it seems that the students/participants agreed to this point of view, as more than 50% expressed agreement to the given statement. Regarding the choice of vocabulary, an overwhelming majority felt that it was suitable for second-year ELT undergraduates (mean score = 3.96, 0% voicing disagreement). Similarly, the mean score for item 2.6 is 4.07, the highest mean score in Table 2. This number indicates that the participants could relate themselves to the collection of eight topics that the activities covered. The element of connectedness is of great significance as most people only become engaged in a particular activity when it is connected to them in some

way. Items 2.7 and 2.8 asked the partakers to evaluate the quality of the videos and audios that the exercises were built on. The figures we have received show that most of the students considered the files to be of good quality even though they were shot and recorded in the 1990s. Moreover, a total of 62.9% picked options 4 and 5, which were approving responses towards the statement “I could understand most of what the characters in the sitcom are saying”; nonetheless, option 2 received two votes.

The objective of the last part of the survey was to find out the participants’ attitude after using the set of activities based on the sitcom “Friends”. Item 2.9 is the only item in Table 2 to have all five options getting selected. As can be inferred from the data, four learners claimed that their knowledge of American culture remained unchanged after completing the exercises, 20 learners were undecided in this aspect while the remaining learners stated that theirs improved to a certain extent. In addition, close to half of the participants declared that they acquired a deeper understanding of colloquial phrases such as slangs and the situations in which they are used. Next, the mean score for item 2.11 is quite high (3.96), illustrating that in general, the learners support the use of this activity set for learning English, specifically when learning independently. The last three statements discussed the level of satisfaction of the participants. Overall, close to 60% reported that they experienced an increase in motivation to better their listening skill whilst watching the sitcom and doing the associated exercises. For the second to last item, the options that the undergraduates chose ranged from option 2 to option 5, with the highest percentage belonging to option 4 (44.4%). Its mean score lies at 3.78, which might imply that, for the most part, the participants were satisfied with our product and that it had benefitted them to some degree. Therefore, above 50% insisted that they would recommend this set of listening activities to other people while the rest stayed neutral.

3.2. Results of the semi-structured interview

Five out of 54 participants were chosen randomly for the semi-structured interviews. The interview questions were designed to explore in details the responses that the participants had given in the survey. The names of the participants will not appear in this report so we have coded them from S1 to S5.

First of all, we asked them about the frequency with which they practiced their listening skills outside of class. S1 and S3 mentioned twice a week, before having a listening lesson the next morning: “I listen in advance to the audio files that the class will be working on the next morning in order to answer my teacher’s questions correctly.” S2 said two to three times per week, either because it was compulsory (homework) or because he/she felt the need to improve his/her listening ability to be able to use English to communicate. The other two students (S4 and S5) replied “every day” as they loved listening to English; they no longer considered it to be a daunting task but more of a form of entertainment. Turning to their listening resources, S4 and S5 reported that they most often practiced listening through authentic sources, such as songs and films, as these films were amusing and featured everyday language used by different groups of people, and “I like listening to English songs because I remember new vocabulary easier through the lyrics and it also has slangs that do not normally appear in official textbooks.” As for S1, S2 and S3, they usually did listening exercises in coursebooks as they believed sticking to the given materials would help them obtain good academic results at university. In addition, S2 also employed short videos that concerned topics of interest for listening practice on YouTube and social media platforms such as Facebook and Instagram.

Regarding the question that concerns the use of the sitcom “Friends” for listening practice, all five participants shared quite similar views. They considered “Friends” to be “interesting”, “funny”, “relatable”, “has plenty of informal

language that is used in normal life” and “helps foreigners explore American culture.” S2 also added that the sitcom “has good-looking actors and actresses” but sometimes the attractive appearance of the cast and the intriguing scenes may “distract” the viewers, causing them to focus on the action instead of picking up new vocabulary. Furthermore, S1 pointed out an element that he/she was not too pleased with, which was the background laughing noise because it was “quite annoying.”

Moving on to the question about the relatability of the topics that the listening activities revolve around, the five interviewees addressed quite a number of topics. “Accommodation” was the first topic to get mentioned by S1, S2, S3 and S5: “I am currently renting a house with my friends/ I am living in the university’s dormitory” so “I have similar housing difficulties with the characters”. The problems range from not being able to find a suitable room for rent to getting irritated by inconsiderate roommates. Additionally, Vietnamese and American people have virtually the same kinds of leisure activities, such as going to the movies, going for some coffee, going shopping and playing sports. The topic “Dating” also received some feedbacks. S4 acclaimed that in his/her opinion, Vietnamese youths are more “reserved” compared to their Western friends. However, both groups go through the same feelings, same stages as well as the same obstacles of a romantic relationship, for example, “large age gap between partners”, “trust issues” or “parents’ disapproval of significant other.” S4 also commented that besides romance, he/she extremely liked the emphasis that was placed on relationships between family members; “I have been living in Quy Nhon with my family my whole life so we see each other every day” and despite frequently having sibling rivalry like “Ross and Monica or Phoebe and Ursula”, “we are always there for each other” – just like the characters in the sitcom. Since all of the research participants were still undergraduates, they could not identify with the topic “Marriage” but

“learnt a few things about it” (stated by all five participants). Perhaps in “Friends”, the kind of relationship that receives the most spotlight is friendship. S3 considered that the different sides of friendship were portrayed in a “realistic way” and S2 expressed that “I have a group of close friends at Quy Nhon University and I hope that our friendship will last for a long time like in the film.”

With regards to the questions concerning the content and presentation of our set of activities and how they could be improved, the interviewees gave highly constructive feedbacks and helped our group make suitable adjustments to our material. In terms of content, they remarked that the instructions were clear and comprehensible and there were examples before the exercises that had unfamiliar formats. They also liked the variety of activities: “Each chapter has many different kinds of exercises” (S5), “I have come across a few types of tasks before so it is fun to try them” (S4) and “I like the exercises with pictures” (S1 and S3). Still, a few learners found that “some exercises were a little difficult” (S1, S2 and S3), namely the summary type as “I could not think of the words to fill in the gaps” (S3), the multiple-choice type because “some questions have options with similar pronunciation or words that all appear in the recording” (S2), and the picture description type due to the fact that the learners “could not remember the details and have to watch the videos a few times” (S1). Furthermore, S4 pointed out that “the range of vocabulary is suitable for my English level” and that “it is nice that sometimes new advanced words appear”, and S5 noted that “sometimes when I hear words that I do not know, I can still guess their meaning based on the video.” All of the interviewees commented that the quality of the videos and audios was “quite good” or “good” even though they were filmed and recorded a long time ago. The undergraduates also expressed fascination with the humor that is incorporated into the conversations; they described that sense of

humor as “smart” (S2), “funny in a nice way” (S3), and “do not create embarrassment” (S5). The speech rate of these files, however, received varied responses. S4 and S5 claimed that they had little difficulty in interpreting what the characters were saying (the general information, not “exactly every word”) while the remaining students thought that occasionally, when the characters showed their emotions, for example, fear or excitement, the speech rate was “too fast.” As for the presentation style, in general, the participants judged it as “good” (S1 and S2), “attractive” (S4 and S5), “easy to follow as the exercises are not crammed into one file” (S3) but there were still minor mistakes that should be fixed; they were uneven alignment, spacing and unfixed font size. The interviewees also suggested that we change to a different online platform to upload our activities instead of using Azota so as to improve the layout and be able to attach the videos and audios directly into each task instead of having to scan QR codes to access those files.

The target of the last section of our interview was to investigate the second-year English majors’ attitudes and perceptions towards our set of activities based on the sitcom “Friends”. They claimed that after experimenting with this material, their everyday vocabulary was “enhanced” (S1), especially their understanding of the everyday situations in which “informal phrases like slangs, phrasal verbs and idioms” (S3 and S4) were used. They also had sharper ears to “distinguish similar-sounding words” (S2), and “get more familiar with” and “copy” “stress, intonation and body gestures” of native speakers (S4 and S5). S1, S2 and S3 also affirmed that their knowledge of American culture was “greatly improved”. They were especially intrigued by “old American pop songs”, “the way Westerners celebrate Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year”, “the way American people call their parents” and “the way people ask each other out on a date”. Last but not least, they made some comments about their perceptions

towards practicing English listening after trying the activity set. S1 and S3 admitted that they felt “less stressed about this skill”, “listening to English can be fun” and authentic materials such as sitcoms “can be beneficial if you know how to use them”. S2 also added “I will continue to watch ‘Friends’ and other similar movies”. As for S4 and S5, since they already utilize such sources to practice listening, their perspective did not change much but they “highly appreciate” our work to create a self-study material that was not only educational but also entertaining.

4. CONCLUSION

The research results reveal that by and large, the group of second-year English-majors were motivated in using authentic materials and quite satisfied with the set of activities which was designed revolving around 236 episodes throughout 10 seasons of the American sitcom “Friends”. After trying these tasks for a month, they stated that they had found an alternative resource for practicing listening – authentic materials, or sitcoms in particular – which not only boosted their motivation for learning English independently but also acted as a means of entertainment. This study highlights the need to incorporate authentic sources into language teaching and learning at formal educational institutions as learners acquire language most effectively when they are stimulated and engaged.

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