

2.6 Audio tools for English practice

Learning languages is essential and invaluable. Languages are a passport to another world. With a language you can get to know and get involved with the culture. It is a sign of respect and creates instant connections. Even if someone speaks your language, to arrive in their country and assume they wish to speak it to you is slightly ignorant. Speaking someone's mother tongue to them creates instant friendships as well as feeling more comfortable around you. A lot of things are lost in translation. There are a lot of idiomatic phrases that cannot be translated because they only make sense in that language. Things like humour and play on words can also only be appreciated in the original language. You can go beneath the and discover the true secrets about the culture [102].

Nowadays it is ordinary for people from different parts of the world to communicate with each other. The language they use is prevalently English. English has become in-built in many aspects of our lives. English is the dominant language of the world. People with good English have serious advantages over those with poor English skills, and these advantages will only get bigger as time passes. People with good English qualify for more job opportunities and higher pay.

The approach to teaching languages is going beyond the traditional four skills of reading, writing, speaking, and listening to that of four modes of communication: reception, production, interaction, and mediation. Taking information, summarising it, and passing it on is an example of what linguists call mediation, and it is a key skill for language learners at all levels. We all have to take information, understand it, and then explain it to others. Although it may be second nature to many, it takes a unique set of skills to pull this off successfully [103].

English is the most commonly spoken language in the world. Today it is possible to find information about almost anything, but most of the information is in the English language. Therefore, if you are unable to read or listen in English well, you have access to only a limited amount of information. If your English is good, you can communicate

with people all over the world. Learning English will make your travel life easier, you can travel abroad without worrying too much about language barrier. This makes English one of the most useful languages to learn.

Many believe that the acquisition of oral language must precede learning to read and write in a second language. Yet, the integration of reading-writing-speaking-listening-thinking may not only enhance, but also, clarify language learning in communicative settings. The developmental process is unique to each and learners develop at their own rates and according to their own particular sequence [104].

Audio material listening is considered to be a key component of learning English. A good piece of audio may increase student motivation as students will want to listen and follow along with the story. Listening activities help students improve pronunciation, comprehension, and build vocabulary. They can be instrumental in supporting language learning and provide learners with the opportunity to listen to authentic conversational.

Listening comprehension plays a key role in both first and second language acquisition, and although out of the four communication skills listening takes up more time than any of the others, it is nevertheless often considered to be the Cinderella of the group in terms of both research and pedagogical practice [105].

Although many overlook its importance in the language acquisition process, listening to authentic audio material is the first and most important strategy in language. It is at the very core of learning a new language, so when making time to study, it is essential to make time for listening.

Despite great attention being paid to various issues of education [107–111], along with different aspects of language learning [112–117], there is a need in a more detailed focus on the concern of using audio tools in a foreign language practice. Subsequently, the purpose of the study is to examine and analyse the key means of audio listening. Due to monitoring and comparative analysis of the internet resources [102–106], the main tools for English practice appear to be the following.

Listening and speaking

British Council. Here you can find activities to practise your listening skills.

Listening will help you to improve your understanding of the language and your pronunciation. The self-study lessons in this section are written and organised by English level based on the Common European Framework of Reference for languages (CEFR). There are recordings of different situations and interactive exercises that practise the listening skills you need to do well in your studies, to get ahead at work and to communicate in English in your free time. The speakers you will hear are of different nationalities and the recordings are designed to show how English is being used in the world today. Take the free online English test to find out which level to choose. Select your level, from elementary to advanced, and improve your listening skills at your own speed, whenever it is convenient for you. Each lesson includes a preparation task, a short dialogue and listening tasks.

The English We Speak. This English learning resource is a section inside the BBC's Learn English website, offering free audio, video and text materials to learners around the world. The section tries to make English interesting for teenagers and young people through audio clips of under three minutes. This is a great chance for the learners to catch up on the very latest English words and phrases. In under 3 minutes, we help you stay ahead of the pack by giving you must have phrases that you can use in your everyday conversation. Amaze your friends, impress your teachers and delight your parents with these fantastic words and phrases. This site is perfect for you if you want to learn real British slang.

DailyStep English. With this website, you can improve your listening comprehension skills gradually – from the very beginning of your inspiring foreign language journey to the very end. The first audio lessons for beginners include just a couple of sentences, while the audio clips for advanced learners can be up to two minutes long. Each lesson includes two audio versions, one in British English and one in American English. You get five free lessons, one for each level. If you like the learning method, you will have to buy a lesson plan. The website maximises your learning potential by giving you only a short lesson each day but making sure that you learn it perfectly. Learn to speak English and understand natural English in just ten minutes a day.

ELLLO (The English Listening Lesson Library Online). This is a wonderful place where everything revolves around practicing your English listening comprehension. There are over 3,000 audio clips divided into seven big categories. Among this huge collection, you will find audio lessons with native speakers, short audios with foreign learners speaking English, audio-based grammar lessons and idiom lessons. Most lessons come with audio or video, a transcript, vocabulary support and interactive quizzes. The site has level codes so you can easily find the videos for your level. The lessons are listed by difficulty in grammar and vocabulary. Just listen and learn to improve speaking fluency and pronunciation.

Listen A Minute. This is a simple website that includes hundreds of very short listening clips. Each of the audios is followed by a lot of activities to help you master the topic. Just one minute a day is everything you need to improve your listening skills. All you need is to focus on the new words, grammar and pronunciation in these short texts. Doing the online activities, discussion, survey and writing will also be helpful. It is better to listen many times – enough for you to understand everything. The website offers some very short listening – less than a minute, as well as free printable handouts, downloads plus MP3 listening and quizzes. All the recordings are in British English.

Advanced English Listening. This is helpful app for learning to listen English and practice English every day. With over 300 lessons based, it includes many levels. The lessons have been carefully selected to provide listening and speaking knowledge. English lessons go from easy to hard, and are very convenient for all levels of learners. With every lesson, there are four parts: transcript, vocabulary (image, text, audio), questions, review about lesson. Features of the app include support listening offline, support google translate, change speed audio, change font size text, share for your friends. The app comprises hundreds of lessons with downloadable audio, transcripts, Google translations, listening comprehension tests and more. You can also download the transcript and exercises of each lesson as a PDF document. This is, in fact, an app for English learners of every level.

Listen English Daily Practice. This free app is fantastic if you want a daily dose

of English listening. It is divided into five categories: beginner, intermediate, advanced, British and American English. The app includes listening comprehension exercises, vocabulary lists, subtitles, among other cool features. This is a free application for listening to speak English. All the articles are categorized and divided the level, which means that you can easily start your listening English practice from the level you are comfortable in and work your way through the more advanced level articles and conversations. With preset scenarios that cover almost all the aspects of the daily lives, you will soon find the results of listening English practice effectively affecting your English listening and speaking skills.

English Listening and Speaking. This useful English learning app will help you improve listening skills and speak English confidently and fluently. There are many lessons from basic to advanced built into the app to help you develop every English skill you are looking for and achieve many achievements in learning English. You can listen and practice everyday communication by yourself right inside this app. English pronunciation lessons help you understand the principles of pronunciation and practice effectively in the app. You can find a lot of topics for listening practice in the app: daily life, science and technology, shopping, travel, school life, etc. It also includes transcripts, exercises, and games. What makes this app unique is that you can practice your listening skills both online and offline.

English Listening Step by Step. This is an free app with more than 1000 audios with test. Each lesson include test and transcript to help you check your listening skill and follow the speaker. If you have any word that make you confuse, you can click on it to translate to your mother language. The listening lessons divide into many grades from beginner English listening, intermediate listening to advance English listening. You can hear English American voice, English British voice or international voice. The lessons comprise many topics: family, self information, food, life style, education, science, business, story listening. Each of the audio clips has a transcript and a listening comprehension quiz. The audios are divided into different levels, and you can choose the variety of English you want to learn.

English Club TV. This is a unique educational channel for those who want to

learn and improve their English. Watching English Club TV for 15 minutes a day, the viewers will learn 2000 new words and 100 grammar structures a year. English Club TV's content is not only effective, but also entertaining. For the best learning and watching experience its viewing schedule has been divided into 3 educational blocks: block A is for beginners and elementary learners; block B is for intermediate and upper-intermediate viewers; block C is for advanced learners and English teachers. English Club TV broadcasts different entertaining shows as well as the world's best films and cartoons with subtitles in English.

Streaming Platforms and Video Resources. Netflix, Hulu, Disney+, Amazon Prime Video – these four are just a small example of all the streaming platforms available online at the moment. It does not really matter which of them you subscribe to. The important thing is how you use them to get an amazing English listening session. Watch them with subtitles so you can follow along with watching the dialogue. You can always pause and rewind the video if there is something you do not understand. If you want to make the most out of streaming platforms, pick shows originally in English.

Listening and reading

Breaking News English. Free, ready-to-use lesson plans on the latest breaking news. New lessons uploaded twice a week. Each lesson includes a PDF containing all-skills activities, a mini-lesson, 5-speed listening, multi-speed scrolled reading, interactive dictation, online quizzes, etc. The lessons are free. There are 7 levels, from elementary to advanced. Lessons have up to 26 pages of printable activities / handouts. The handouts are readily reproducible. There is a new lesson twice a week. All lessons are based on stories currently in the news – as the world's news breaks. All lessons are also downloadable PDF format. There are 30+ online quizzes for each lesson. Listening files in British and North American English can be downloaded in mp3 format or subscribed to via a podcast. There is graded listening with each lesson. Choose a level on the piece of news you want to read or go directly to the list of news from your level. Thousands of teachers and students say they love using the news lessons.

IDEA (International Dialects of English Archive). It was created as the internet's

first archive of primary-source recordings of English-language dialects and accents as heard around the world. IDEA is now the largest archive of its kind. Its recordings are principally in English, are of native speakers, and include both English-language dialects and English spoken in the accents of other languages. Many include brief demonstrations of the speaker's native language too. To find an example of an accent or dialect, use the global map, or the dialects and accents tab on the menu bar. The site is also fully searchable, not just by country, state, and province, but also by characteristics of each speaker, such as ethnicity, age and occupation; even single phrases from transcriptions and phonetics can be searched online. You may conveniently listen to the streaming audio while reading the accompanying transcription and commentary. New recordings, their accompanying transcriptions and scholarly commentaries are added frequently. Each recording includes both a reading and some unscripted speech – about four minutes in all. This site is for advanced learners who are looking for a real challenge.

TalkEnglish. To become a fluent English speaker, you must study and master reading, listening, and speaking. The lessons here are structured to give you practice in all three areas at the same time. Listening is an important part of communication. If you do not understand what the other person is saying, then you will not know how to respond. This section was created to give students daily practice on listening. In this English listening section, students can constantly listen to the audio files provided here. There is also question and answers to allow students to gauge how they are doing. The website offers three levels: basic, intermediate and advanced, with 34 audio lessons each. Every lesson is divided into three easy steps: listen to the dialogue, answer the quiz questions and read the dialogue, if you want the extra practice. The goal is to help you learn English speaking so you can speak English fluently.

Audiobooks. You are going to love this app, if you enjoy listening to full audiobooks. The selection of books is fantastic, as there are thousands of them. But that is not the only thing the app has to offer. It also allows you to download your favorite audiobooks so you can listen to them offline. If you do not have time to listen to a full story, you can always visit the podcasts section. Whether you are stuck in

traffic, powering through your workout or cramming for an English test – the app puts the most beloved audiobooks at your fingertips. Or if you do not have time for an audiobook you can listen to a podcast instead. Podcasts are like your own personalized radio station, proving a steady stream of topical, fun episodes to enjoy. The app's features include thousands of fantastic, free audiobooks for you to choose from, a carefully curated collection of podcasts to enjoy, offline download perfect for your commute, background and airplay enabled playback, fully customizable sleep timer. Thousands of free audiobooks await.

VOA (Voice of America) Learning English. The resource has been devoted to teaching English to students around the world for over six decades. Learning English is VOA's multimedia source of news and information for millions of English learners worldwide. It began as Special English, where the newscasts and features were a primary fixture of VOA's international shortwave broadcasts for more than half a century. In 2014, the line of products was expanded to include more English teaching materials, and the service became known as Learning English. The lessons are divided into beginning, intermediate and advanced levels. They gather national and international news and transform them into lessons you can watch or listen and read at the same time.

Scientific American Podcasts. The Scientific American journal has tons of podcast episodes on every scientific topic you could imagine. Most episodes last between 10 to 20 minutes, but there are some that are only a couple of minutes long. Scientific American covers the most important and exciting research, ideas and knowledge in science, health, technology, the environment and society. It is committed to sharing trustworthy knowledge, enhancing our understanding of the world, and advancing social justice. Scientific American reaches more than 10 million people around the world each month through its website, print and digital editions, newsletters and app and millions more through social media and other platforms.

LearnEnglishFunWay.Com. The goal in creating this website is to help make learning English as fun and enjoyable as possible. This website is beneficial for beginners and intermediate-level learners, but anyone can benefit from here.

Sometimes all you need is a lot of short stories read by native speakers in slow-but-not-very-slow English. That is exactly what the listening section of this website has to offer. Here you can listen and read the text at the same time, read aloud a paragraph or a whole text, listen again, follow the text, and repeat the reading aloud, trying to imitate natural pronunciation as much as possible. There are not any other features besides the audio and the transcript there, but if you want to learn more English, you can visit the other sections on the site.

Listening and writing

Speechling. In the settings box right under dictation practice, choose the variety of English you want to practice, the gender of the speaker and the category/level/topic you want. It has a lot of features to improve your English: 10000's of professional recorded audio from actors of both genders, content for beginners and experts alike, lots of fun games and exercises, synchronized mobile app, tons of offline resources, and best of all – free language coaching. Build your vocabulary with a series of cloze tests, simply fill in the blank. Thousands of sentences available for dictation, from beginner to advanced. As a personal tutoring service, the certified pronunciation coaches give feedback on your speaking. Advanced students can answer a question or describe an image, and get a feedback similar to what a private tutor will provide. As a technology platform, it is available as an educational tool 24/7. The site uses spaced repetition and sophisticated algorithms to let the users practice from thousands of sentences with real human voices from both genders. By breaking down spoken language barriers, it is possible to increase access to education, employment opportunities, and a better quality of life.

Randall's ESL Cyber Listening Lab. This superb website is a listening lab for everyone whose main learning focus is listening to English. All the activities included on the site are audio-based. You can choose among different levels of difficulty, as well as categories such as culture, vocabulary and academic English. The website has been providing online English listening comprehension activities for ESL and EFL learners since 1998. The activities focus on everyday English comprehension skills at three levels based on content, voices, vocabulary, and natural speed. A combination of

adult, teenage, and children's voices are included. Randall has created a variety of other ESL listening activities to improve your comprehension, speaking, vocabulary, writing and cultural awareness.

English Grammar. The educational website will be the new favourite place for advanced English learners looking for listening exercises designed specifically for this level. Choose the type of listening exercise you want to do and pick a topic from the list. There are lots of online exercises and downloadable worksheets. Exercises can be done on browser, tablets and smartphones. Downloads are available for free and are in PDF Format. This website provides the learners with interactive practice material and online grammar and vocabulary exercises for students and teachers. Listening comprehension exercises for advanced students are available together with multiple choice tests.

Grounding on the above results, the following *conclusions* can be made. Language is a social practice defined by the values of a culture. Learning a language is an opportunity for all language learners to improve their skills. Language practice entails the process of working with language. Language learners practice how to integrate a variety of cognitive skills in order to produce oral communication by imitating what they have learned.

English listening is essential, because for successful communication, you need to speak and listen well. If you understand everything but cannot speak, you can still be perceived as a pleasant conversationalist. But if you only speak and do not understand what they say to you in English, it is worth improving your listening skills. English practice with various audio tools is meant to help you understand the main points of clear, standard speech about everyday or job-related topics. Therefore, using different audio resources in English practice is one of the most natural methods of learning and mastering the language.