



Vocational College Students' Perceptions of English Audio-Visual Materials in Listening Comprehension Learning

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ABSTRACT

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English audio-visual materials (AVMs) have become increasingly common in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) listening instruction; however, learners' perceptions of how these materials support listening comprehension remain underexplored, particularly in vocational education contexts. This study investigates vocational college students' perceptions of the role of English AVMs in enhancing listening comprehension. A quantitative survey was conducted among 98 vocational college students in Guangzhou, China, focusing on students' perceived benefits of AVMs in listening learning. Descriptive statistical analysis was used to summarize students' responses to ten perception-based questionnaire items. The findings indicate that students generally hold moderately positive perceptions of AVMs. They particularly value the visual support and multimodal input provided by AVMs, which they feel help them follow spoken content, identify main ideas, and infer meaning from context, tone, and body language. However, a large proportion of neutral responses and relatively lower ratings regarding listening confidence and understanding fast speech suggest cautious attitudes. These findings highlight the supportive but not decisive role of AVMs in listening comprehension and underline the importance of how AVMs are integrated into teaching. The study offers pedagogical insights for improving the use of audio-visual resources in vocational EFL listening instruction.

Keywords: *Audio-visual Materials; Listening Comprehension; Learner Perceptions; Vocational Education; EFL; Multimedia Learning*

Background

Listening comprehension is widely recognized as an essential yet challenging skill in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning, as it involves processing rapid speech, identifying key ideas, and interpreting meaning in real time (Whitehead, 2020; Almalki *et al.*, 2023). For many learners, especially those in non-English-speaking environments, limited exposure to authentic spoken English further increases the difficulty of developing listening competence (Farooqi, 2023). In vocational college contexts, students often face additional challenges due to varied proficiency levels, fewer opportunities to use English outside the classroom, and learning environments that mainly emphasize practical rather than academic language development (Hardiah, 2019). Therefore, identifying effective instructional materials and approaches is particularly important for listening instruction in vocational education.

In recent years, English audio-visual materials (AVMs), such as videos, films, and multimedia resources, have been increasingly used in EFL listening classrooms. Compared with traditional audio-only materials, AVMs provide both auditory and visual input, allowing learners to access gestures, facial expressions, setting, and other contextual information while listening. Previous research suggests that AVMs can support listening comprehension by reducing processing difficulty, providing contextual cues, and increasing learning engagement (Rahman & Jamila, 2024; Xiao, 2025). As a result, AVMs have become a common instructional resource in English listening teaching, including in vocational college settings. However, although many studies have examined the effectiveness of AVMs in improving listening outcomes, fewer have focused on how learners themselves perceive the role of AVMs in supporting listening comprehension. Learner perceptions are important because students' beliefs and attitudes can influence their learning motivation, level of participation, and willingness to engage with instructional materials (Syahid *et al.*, 2024). Understanding how students view AVMs can therefore provide meaningful insight into their practical value in classroom settings.

The vocational college context deserves particular attention, as vocational students' learning needs, confidence levels, and classroom experiences may differ from those in academically oriented institutions (Atiyah & Izzah, 2019; Hardiah, 2019). Examining vocational college students' perceptions can help clarify whether AVMs are viewed as helpful in this specific educational setting. Based on these considerations, this study aims to explore vocational college students' perceptions of the role of English AVMs in enhancing their listening comprehension. Using questionnaire data collected from vocational college students in Guangzhou, China, this study addresses the following research question: How do vocational college students perceive the role of English audio-visual materials in enhancing their listening comprehension?

By focusing on learner perceptions, this study seeks to provide a clearer understanding of how AVMs are viewed in vocational EFL listening instruction. The findings may also offer practical insights for teachers who wish to integrate audio-visual resources into listening classrooms.

Literature Review

Audio-Visual Materials in EFL Listening

Listening comprehension is widely recognized as one of the most challenging skills in EFL learning because it involves processing rapid speech, understanding main ideas, and interpreting meaning in real time. In many EFL contexts, learners often have limited exposure to authentic spoken English, which makes listening to development even more difficult (Almalki *et al.*, 2023; Whitehead, 2020). Traditional listening instruction has tended to rely heavily on scripted audio recordings and grammar-focused

activities, which may not fully reflect natural communication and may increase learners' anxiety (Farooqi, 2023).

In response, researchers have increasingly highlighted the value of AVMs in listening instruction. AVMs combine auditory language with visual information such as gestures, facial expressions, and contextual settings, which can help learners follow meaning more easily and reduce the processing burden associated with audio-only input. By presenting language in realistic situations and authentic communicative contexts, AVMs can support the development of both comprehension and awareness of how language is actually used in real life (Rahman & Jamila, 2024). Similarly, Zhang and Mohammed (2024) found that multimodal teaching integrating visual and auditory resources enhanced higher vocational students' English listening and learning motivation, highlighting the value of multimodal input in vocational EFL instruction." In addition, AVMs have been shown to increase engagement and interest, which is particularly useful for learners who may otherwise feel anxious or demotivated in listening lessons (Xiao, 2025; Syahid *et al.*, 2024). Therefore, AVMs are widely recognized as a meaningful and supportive resource for EFL listening learning.

Learners' Perceptions of Audio-Visual Materials

Beyond objective performance outcomes, learner perceptions provide important insight into how effective AVMs are in real classroom settings. Many studies have reported that learners generally hold positive attitudes toward AVMs because they provide clearer support for understanding meaning, allow learners to see context, and make listening tasks more engaging and realistic (Rahman & Jamila, 2024). Learners often feel that seeing speakers, situations, and visual cues helps them predict meaning, identify key information, and stay focused during listening. However, some studies also indicate that perceptions are not always uniformly strong. While learners may acknowledge the benefits of AVMs, they may still feel uncertain about whether AVMs alone can significantly improve more challenging aspects of listening, such as fast speech or unfamiliar accents (Xiao, 2025). In some cases, students may also lack confidence or familiarity with multimedia tools, which can influence how effectively they engage with AVM-based listening tasks (Hardiah, 2019). These findings suggest that learners' perceptions are often positive but may also include a degree of caution or uncertainty.

Perceptions matter because they can influence motivation, willingness to participate, and engagement with learning tasks. Similarly, Mohammed *et al.* (2022) highlighted the importance of learners' perceptions and satisfaction in technology-supported learning environments, indicating that students' experiences with digital learning can influence their engagement with technology-mediated instruction. Positive perceptions can encourage learners to invest more effort, while unclear or neutral perceptions may limit the benefits that AVMs can bring to listening development (Syahid *et al.*, 2024). Therefore, understanding learner perceptions is an important part of evaluating the role of AVMs in listening comprehension.

The Vocational College Context

The vocational college context provides an important and meaningful setting for studying AVMs. Vocational students often face particular challenges in English learning, such as limited exposure to authentic spoken English, lower confidence, or learning environments that prioritize practical skills over academic language development (Hardiah, 2019). Many traditional listening materials may not fully match their real communication needs, which can make listening difficult and demotivating. Research in vocational English contexts has shown that AVMs can help address some of these challenges. Studies have reported that video-based and multimedia listening materials can help vocational learners better understand meaning, especially when tasks are linked to real-life or job-related situations (Atiyah & Izzah, 2019; Hardiah, 2019). Supporting this view, Zhang *et al.*, (2026) demonstrated the potential of

multimodal learning approaches for enhancing English language proficiency among higher vocational students in China, reinforcing the relevance of multimodal instruction in vocational EFL contexts. More recent work has also highlighted how technology-supported AVMs can reduce listening anxiety and help students cope with fast or specialized content (Xiao, 2025). By presenting language within meaningful workplace or everyday communication settings, AVMs may better match vocational learners' needs and activate relevant background knowledge.

Because vocational students' learning experiences, goals, and challenges differ from those of students in academic-oriented institutions, it is important to specifically explore how vocational college students perceive AVMs in their listening learning. Their perceptions can help clarify whether AVMs meet their needs, whether they feel supported by such materials, and how AVMs function in this particular educational context.

Overall, previous research shows that AVMs can provide meaningful support for listening comprehension by offering multimodal input, authentic context, and greater engagement (Rahman & Jamila, 2024). At the same time, studies on learners' perceptions indicate that while many students view AVMs positively, some remain cautious or uncertain, especially when it comes to confidence, different accents, or fast speech (Hardiah, 2019; Xiao, 2025). The vocational college context adds further importance, as AVMs may be particularly relevant for learners who benefit from context-rich, practical, and engaging learning materials (Atiyah & Izzah, 2019; Hardiah, 2019). Based on this background, the present study focuses on vocational college students' perceptions of the role of English AVMs in listening comprehension. By examining questionnaire data, it aims to provide a clearer understanding of how students view the benefits and limitations of AVMs in their listening learning.

Methods

Research Design

This study adopted a quantitative, questionnaire-based research design to investigate vocational college students' perceptions of the role of English AVMs in listening comprehension. A survey approach was considered appropriate because it allows for the collection of learners' self-reported views and experiences regarding the use of audio-visual materials in listening instruction.

It should be noted that this study does not aim to establish causal relationships between the use of AVMs and improvements in listening performance. Instead, the focus is on exploring how students perceive the contribution of AVMs to their listening comprehension. This perception-based design aligns with the research question and the nature of the data collected.

Participants

The participants of this study were 98 vocational college students from a vocational institution in Guangzhou, China. All participants were enrolled in English courses at the time of data collection and had prior experience using English AVMs in listening lessons. The students represented typical learners in the vocational college context, with varied English proficiency levels and learning backgrounds. Participation in the study was voluntary, and the data was collected for research purposes only. Basic background information was collected through the questionnaire to provide an overall profile of the participants.

Instrument

Data was collected using a structured questionnaire developed for the original research project. To this paper, the analysis focuses specifically on Section B of the questionnaire (see Appendix), which examined students' perceptions of the role of English AVMs in listening comprehension. Section B

consisted of a series of statements related to the perceived benefits of using AVMs in listening learning. These items addressed aspects such as understanding spoken content, awareness of pronunciation and authentic language use, and learning engagement. Responses were measured using a Likert-scale format, allowing students to indicate the extent to which they agreed with each statement. The questionnaire was administered in English learning contexts familiar to the participants, and all items were designed to be clear and accessible to vocational college students.

Results and Discussion

Data Collection and Analysis

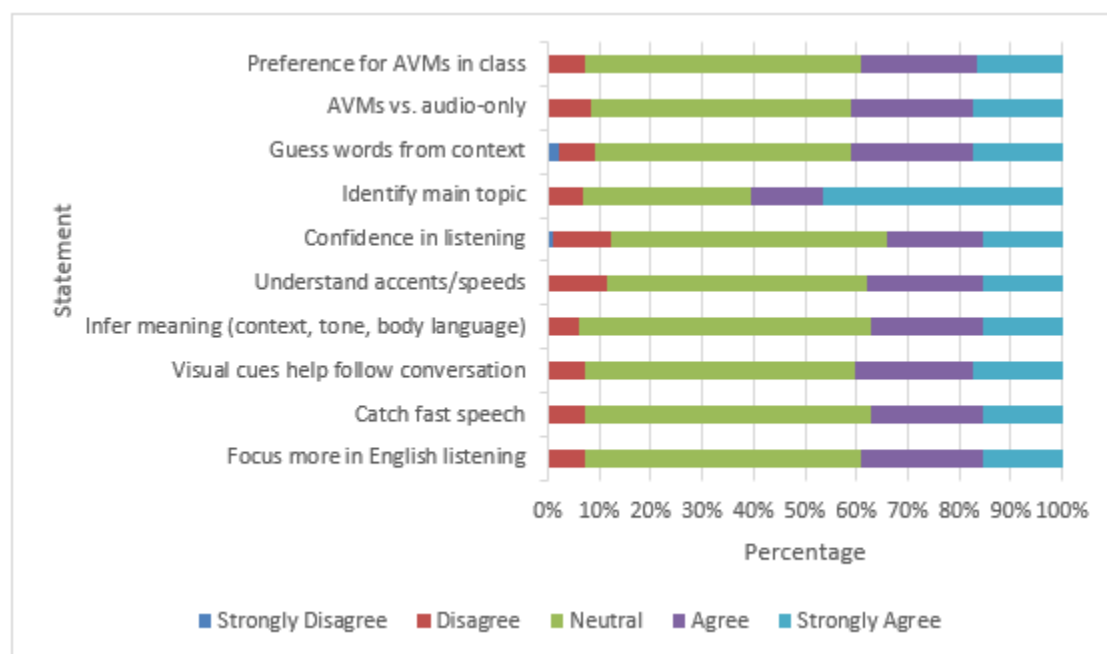
The questionnaire data were collected online during the data collection period. All completed questionnaires were checked before analysis to ensure data completeness. Data analysis was conducted using descriptive statistical methods. Measures such as means and standard deviations were used to summarize students' overall perceptions and response patterns for the items in Section B. Reliability analysis was also conducted to examine the internal consistency of the questionnaire items. The results of the analysis are presented in the following section, with a focus on key dimensions of students' perceived support from English AVMs in listening comprehension.

The reliability analysis showed excellent internal consistency for Section B of the questionnaire (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.98$). This section reports the descriptive results of students' perceptions of the role of English AVMs in listening comprehension. Section B consisted of ten statements rated on a five-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree). Descriptive statistics, including response distributions and mean scores, were used to summarize students' responses.

Overall Response Trends

Overall, the results indicate that students expressed moderate agreement with the perceived benefits of AVMs in listening comprehension. Across all ten items, the overall mean score was 3.46, suggesting a generally positive but not strong level of agreement.

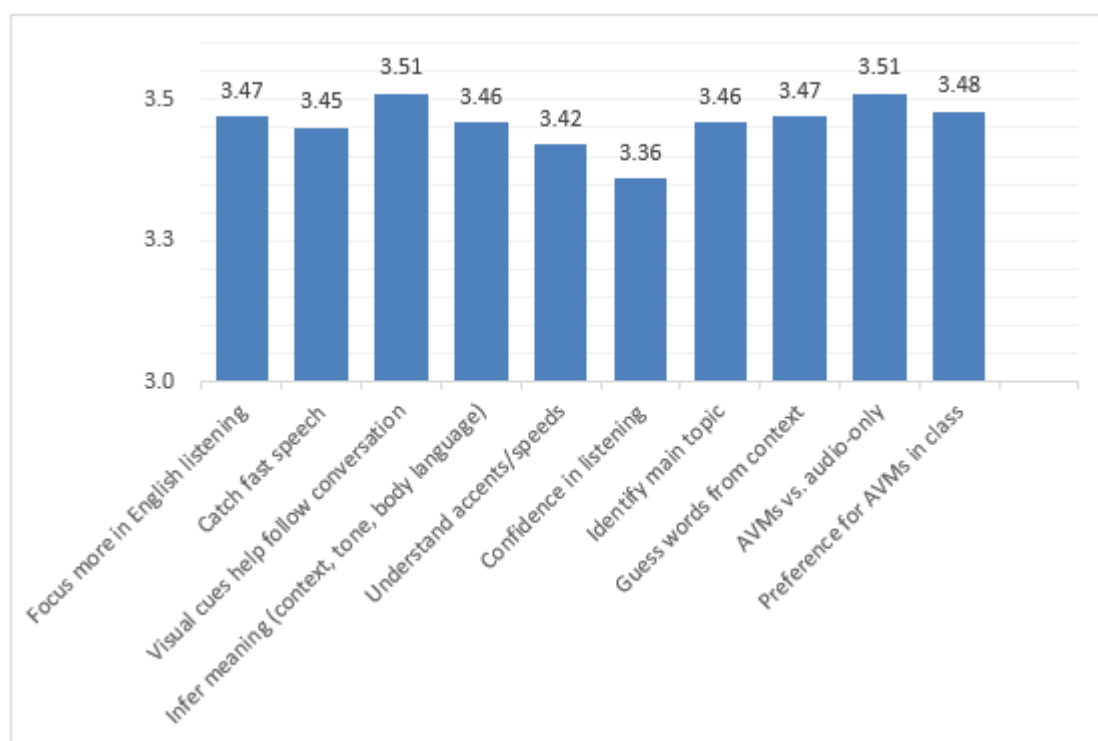
Figure 1. Student Perceptions of AVMs in Listening Comprehension



As shown in Figure 1, a large proportion of students selected the Neutral option for most items. Approximately 50%–56% of responses across the statements fell into the neutral category. At the same time, the combined percentages of Agree and Strongly Agree responses ranged from about 38% to 40%, while Disagree and Strongly Disagree responses remained relatively low. This distribution indicates that students neither strongly rejected nor strongly endorsed the role of AVMs, but tended to hold cautious and balanced views.

Highest-Rated Perceptions of AVMs

Figure 2. Mean Scores of Student Perception (1=Strongly Disagree, 5=Strongly Agree)



Among the ten items, two statements received the highest mean scores. The item “I find it easier to follow English conversations when visual cues are available” recorded a mean score of $M = 3.51$. Similarly, the statement “AVMs are more helpful than just listening to audio recordings” also achieved a mean score of $M = 3.51$. These results indicate that students most strongly recognized the value of visual support and multimodal input in listening activities. Other items also showed relatively positive mean scores. For example, “AVMs help me infer meaning from context, tone, and body language” obtained a mean score of $M = 3.46$, while “AVMs help me identify the main ideas when listening” reached $M = 3.46$. In addition, “AVMs improve my ability to guess unfamiliar words from the context” had a mean score of $M = 3.47$. These findings reflect consistent perceptions of AVMs as supportive tools for understanding spoken English.

Lower-Rated Perceptions of AVMs

Although overall perceptions were positive, some items received comparatively lower mean scores. The lowest mean score was found for the statement “I feel more confident in my listening skills when AVMs are used” ($M = 3.36$). While this score still falls above the neutral point, it indicates weaker agreement compared with other items. Similarly, the item “AVMs help me understand different accents and speech rates” recorded a mean score of $M = 3.42$, and “AVMs improve my ability to understand fast speech in English” received a mean score of $M = 3.45$. These results suggest variation in students’ perceptions

across different aspects of listening comprehension.

In summary, the descriptive results show that vocational college students generally reported moderately positive perceptions of English audio-visual materials in listening comprehension. Mean scores across all items ranged from 3.36 to 3.51, with visual support and audio-visual input being rated more positively than confidence-related aspects. The dominance of neutral responses across items indicates a cautious but overall favorable perception of AVMs among the participants.

This study aimed to explore vocational college students' perceptions of the role of English AVMs in listening comprehension. The results showed that students generally held moderately positive views toward the use of AVMs, although a large proportion of responses were neutral across most items. This section discusses the meaning of these findings in relation to the research question and the vocational college context.

First, the results suggest that students recognized the supportive role of AVMs in understanding spoken English. The highest mean scores were found in statements related to visual support and multimodal input, such as finding it easier to follow conversations and perceiving AVMs as more helpful than audio-only materials. This indicates that students valued the combination of visual cues, images, gestures, and contextual information when listening. In other words, many students believed that seeing the speaker and the situation helped them understand meaning more clearly and follow content more effectively.

Second, the results also showed relatively positive perceptions in areas related to comprehension strategies, such as identifying main ideas and inferring meaning from context, tone, or body language. These findings suggest that students felt that AVMs could help them deal with listening tasks in a more meaningful way, rather than only relying on sound. This reflects an awareness that audio-visual materials can offer more information to support understanding than traditional audio recordings alone.

However, the findings also revealed some weaker areas of perception. The lowest mean score was found in the statement related to listening confidence. Although the mean score was still above the neutral level, it was lower than other items. This indicates that while students acknowledged certain benefits of AVMs, they did not strongly feel that these materials directly increased their confidence in listening ability. In addition, items related to understanding different accents or fast speech also received comparatively lower mean scores. This suggests that students may feel that audio-visual support alone is not enough to fully solve more challenging aspects of listening comprehension.

Another important pattern in the data is the large proportion of neutral responses, which appear across almost all items. This shows that many students remained cautious or uncertain about the effectiveness of AVMs. One possible reason is that students may have limited experience reflecting on learning tools or evaluating their learning processes. Another reason may be that although they use AVMs in class, they may not always receive enough structured guidance to help them clearly see how these materials support their learning. As a result, they neither strongly reject nor strongly endorse AVMs, but hold balanced and careful views.

Taken together, the findings suggest that vocational college students generally view AVMs as helpful, especially in supporting understanding through visual and contextual information. At the same time, their cautious attitudes and lower confidence-related perceptions indicate that AVMs alone may not be enough to fully change students' listening experiences or beliefs. This highlights the importance of how AVMs are used in teaching. Simply using AVMs may not automatically lead to strong positive perceptions; students may benefit more when AVMs are combined with clear learning tasks, teacher guidance, and opportunities to practice listening in meaningful ways.

Overall, the findings provide a clearer picture of how vocational college students perceive AVMs in listening comprehension. They see AVMs as useful and supportive, especially for following meaning, but they also show uncertainty and limited confidence gains. These mixed yet generally positive perceptions are important for understanding how AVMs function in real classroom settings and how they may be better integrated into listening instruction in vocational education.

Conclusion

This study explored vocational college students' perceptions of the role of English AVMs in listening comprehension. The findings showed that students generally held moderately positive views toward AVMs. They especially valued the visual support and multimodal input provided by AVMs, which they felt helped them follow spoken content more easily and understand meaning with the help of context, images, tone, and body language. Students also expressed positive perceptions toward using AVMs to identify main ideas and infer meaning, suggesting that AVMs were viewed as helpful tools in supporting listening comprehension in practical classroom situations. However, the results also revealed some areas of uncertainty. A large number of neutral responses appeared across many questionnaire items, and confidence-related items received comparatively lower mean scores. This indicates that while students recognized certain benefits of AVMs, they did not strongly believe that AVMs alone could significantly increase their confidence or fully solve more difficult listening challenges, such as understanding fast speech or different accents. Overall, students' perceptions can be described as positive but cautious.

These findings have several teaching implications. They suggest that AVMs are more effective when they are not only used as attractive learning materials, but are also supported with clear learning tasks, guidance, and practice opportunities. Simply playing videos may not be enough; teachers may need to help students actively engage with AVMs and understand how these materials can support their listening development. More broadly, Chui and Mohammed (2024) emphasized the importance of systematically designed instructional approaches in higher vocational English education, suggesting that learning materials should be integrated within purposeful pedagogical frameworks. In this way, students may be better able to recognize the value of AVMs and make better use of them in learning. This study also has some limitations. It is based on questionnaire data from vocational college students in one context, and it focuses only on students' perceptions rather than actual listening performance. Therefore, the findings cannot be generalized in all contexts. Future research could include students from different institutions or regions combining questionnaires with interviews to gain deeper insights or examine the actual impact of AVMs on listening performance alongside students' perceptions. In conclusion, this study provides a clearer understanding of how vocational college students view AVMs in listening comprehension. Students generally see AVMs as helpful, particularly in providing visual and contextual support, but their cautious attitudes also remind us that the effectiveness of AVMs depends on how they are used in teaching. The findings contribute to ongoing discussions about the role of AVMs in EFL listening instruction and offer useful guidance for improving their integration in vocational education.

Declarations

Ethics Approval and Consent to Participate: Informed consent was obtained from all participants before data collection. Their involvement was voluntary, and the confidentiality of their responses was fully maintained.

Conflicts of Interest: Not Applicable.

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