Authentic Materials in Listening Lessons:
A Study of Swedish Upper-Secondary English Teachers' Attitudes toward Authentic Materials in Listening Lessons

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Abstract

This study examines Swedish upper-secondary English teachers’ attitudes toward authentic materials in listening lessons in order to shed light on whether or not teachers implement authentic material in their listening lessons and if so, the reasons teachers give for including authentic material. The reason for conducting this research is that teachers might rely too extensively on simplified, graded and/or scripted purpose-written materials (i.e. textbooks) in their listening lessons. Since the listening material commonly found in purpose-written materials is different from the language in the “real world”, these materials might do a less than adequate job at preparing learners for conversations and interactions in the “real world” outside the language-learning classroom.

Data were gathered through a researcher-developed questionnaire followed by interviews with two practicing teachers of English. The findings reveal that all of the participating teachers in this study (n=10) use authentic material in their listening lessons and that the primary reasons for including it are that teachers find authentic material more interesting and because teachers believe that authentic material can be better aligned with students’ interests, societal lives and future working lives. In addition, teachers reading this essay can increase their awareness of and reflect on why and how they themselves implement authentic materials in listening lessons, which in turn can assist teachers in aligning their teaching and their material choices with the subject syllabus for English better than they could without using authentic materials.
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1. Introduction

During my time in school in Sweden in the 1990’s and early 2000’s I attended many listening lessons in the different English courses, and I am generally confident that many children studying English in the Swedish education system had or are currently having experiences similar to mine. A common feature in the listening lessons, primary school through upper-secondary, was that nearly all followed the same pattern. The teacher played the textbook assigned audiotape and we all tried our best to listen for the information we needed to answer the questions in our workbooks. In most cases, the audio from the tape was the British accent Received Pronunciation, and it usually involved two individuals speaking to one another. The speakers took careful turns, meaning that the first speaker said all s/he had to say in full before the next speaker spoke. There were no elisions or assimilations and instead every word was carefully articulated. This careful articulation presented to us in school was not only unnatural but also unlikely to occur in a conversation outside of the classroom.

After twelve years in school, of which I had English as a subject for nine, I felt that I could understand everything in English, as I was quite proficient and received a good grade in my final English course. Soon after graduation, I started working for a multinational industrial company and eventually became head of my department, which meant many meetings, phone calls, videoconferences, etc. in English with my colleagues in partner companies around the world. However, in many cases, I found it difficult to understand other speakers, and I frequently employed the “I beg your pardon” question not only to speakers of English as a second or foreign language (ESL/EFL), but also in conversations with Americans, British and other first language English users. No one seemed to speak the English that I was used to, the English I had encountered in the Swedish educational system.

For years, I did not understand why I had difficulties in understanding but then, several years later, I enrolled at university to become an English language teacher. There, I came across the term “authentic material” (AM) and realized that during my time in school, I had never been exposed to AM. Instead, I was only exposed to material specifically designed for ESL/EFL purposes. This lack of exposure to AM meant I was not adequately prepared for real-life communication and interaction in English, as evidenced by my frustration in the workplace. I expect that many students have or have had similar first-hand experiences with the mismatch that exists between listening in English classes and listening in the “real world”.

In the field of second language (L2) English education, there are both advocates for and opponents against the use of AM. It is therefore important to investigate, not only if and why
teachers of English in Swedish upper-secondary schools implement AM in their listening lessons, but also to explore teacher attitudes toward AM in listening lessons. Thus, the objective of this project is to provide insights on the use of AM for listening lessons in upper-secondary school. Hopefully this insight can help reduce the gap between English taught and used in classrooms and the English required for conversations and interactions in the world outside the classroom. After all, the Subject Syllabus for English (SSE) set out by the Swedish Ministry of Education explicitly states that students should be exposed to “[s]poken language, also with different social and dialect features” (p. 3), “[c]oherent spoken language and conversations of different kinds, such as debates, lectures and interviews” (p. 7), and “complex and formal texts which relate, discuss, argue, report, describe and investigate” (p. 11). As such, this project will likely be of interest to both pre-service and practicing teachers who must transfer teaching criteria from the SSE to the classroom context and who must make decisions about using published textbook material and/or AM for the teaching of listening.

By understanding current attitudes toward AM, it is possible to shed light on current classroom practices and raise awareness of teacher attitudes toward AM. In addition, this project aims to prompt teachers to think about when, why, and how they implement AM in listening lessons and the benefits AM can have in comparison to textbook material. This in turn may help them align their teaching and material choices not only with the SSE but also with up-to-date research into the use of AM. In addition, by implementing AM, teachers can better prepare their learners for the language they will encounter in the “real world”. This would have certainly helped me prepare for listening in international interactions and the many challenges they pose. In sum, my personal anecdote serves as one example of a problematic issue and cause of frustration to which I expect many students in Sweden can relate. It illustrates the importance of implementing AM in listening lessons in L2 classrooms.

This paper begins by providing background discussion of AM as they relate to purpose-written materials, the skill of listening, the SSE and previous and current research. It then moves on to pose the specific research questions (RQs) that were investigated. Methods for the study are explained, after which results and findings are presented and discussed. The paper closes with a conclusion where key findings and results are presented.

2. Background
In this paper, the notion of AM is at the forefront, and in particular AM for listening lessons. This background section first explores the concept of AM, and then moves into the area of
AM in listening lessons. It next highlights the connection between AM, listening and the SSE at upper-secondary schools in Sweden. Throughout this section, an overview of arguments for and against AM is provided. The background section concludes with previous research.

2.1 Defining Authentic Material

Different writers define AM in diverse ways. Nunan (1989) defines AM as material not specifically designed for ESL/EFL purposes. McGrath (2002) and Foppoli (2006) support that line of thought and add that AM materials are designed to communicate to native users of the language, not for L2 learners. According to McGrath (2002), “authentic texts were not written to serve as practice grounds or hunting grounds for language learners. They were written to convey information, transmit ideas, express opinions and feelings, entertain” (p. 107). Harmer (2007) suggests that AM “is not altered in such a way as to make it unrecognisable in style and construction from the language which competent speakers encounter in many walks of life” (p. 274). Combining aspects of these definitions produces a definition that states AM are materials not specifically designed for L2 teaching and learning, the intended audience is native users of the language, and the material is unaltered and in its original form.

Likewise, writers term inauthentic materials (IAM) in different ways. McGrath (2002) defines IAM as “specially written” (p. 105). Hedge (2000) and Lundahl (2012) both refer to them as learning materials, (i.e. textbooks, workbooks, etc.) which have been specifically made for ESL/EFL purposes. Field (2008) provides the most useful description of IAM when he compares AM to what he calls “[p]urpose-written materials” (p. 270). He explains that a purpose-written material is a scripted and/or graded material specifically designed for teaching and learning. He also specifies that a scripted material is performed in a studio, by actors who are using prewritten scripts, and a graded material is a simplified material that has been designed to suit a specific learner level (e.g. beginner, intermediate, etc.). Consequently, based on the above definitions, IAM can be taken to be materials that have been purposefully designed for ESL/EFL purposes, the intended audience is learners, and the language in the material has been generated and graded specifically for an L2 audience. In other words, textbooks and materials available from teaching and learning websites are by definition specially- and purpose-written learning material and therefore, IAM.

For the purposes of this paper, AM refers to a combination of the definitions provided by Nunan (1998), Foppoli (2006), and Harmer (2007), meaning that everything that teachers use
in class that has not been specifically designed for L2 teaching and learning and where the original intended audience is native speakers classifies as AM.

2.2 Theory and History of Authentic Material

Vygotsky’s (1978) notion of the zone of proximal development (ZPD) suggests that learners are able to acquire language and advance their knowledge of the language if they are involved in meaningful and interactive environments and activities. Likewise, Krashen’s (1982; 1985) monitor model provides two hypotheses of particular importance in relation to this project. The first is the comprehensible input hypothesis (i.e. I + 1), which suggests that learners acquire language when exposed to input that includes what they can already understand plus some input that is a step beyond that level. In other words, when learners are exposed to input that includes language they already know, combined with some new elements or features, just beyond their language level, acquisition of these new elements or features of the target language, in theory, takes place. Second, Krashen’s (1982) affective filter hypothesis, which refers to the learner’s feelings or attitudes toward the input, is relevant. This hypothesis suggests, in theory, that even if learners are exposed to appropriate input in terms of the I+1 hypothesis, s/he still might not acquire the target language. To put it another way, if the learner is anxious, nervous, bored etc. the input may be filtered out by learners and thereby hinder acquisition.

Since using AM in listening lessons can lead to more motivated, interested and stimulated learners (see sections 2.3 and 2.7 for more on this topic) the affective filter is less likely to filter out the input. In addition, AM introduces learners to the language of the “real world”, the language learners will probably encounter outside the classroom context and as a result, learners get to listen to and use the language in and for meaningful purposes (see sections 2.3 and 2.5) which in turn creates an environment where learners can acquire and expand their knowledge of the language, as suggested by Vygotsky’s (1978) notion of ZPD. In sum, implementing comprehensible AM that includes new features just beyond the learner’s level in listening lessons can help learners to acquire more language than they could with IAM.

Traditionally, though, AM was never seen as a valuable or indeed as a needed source of input in ESL/EFLS classrooms because it did not align with the teaching objectives of early approaches. Flowerdew and Miller (2005) provide a condensed and useful explanation of the different language-learning approaches employed over the last 100 years. One of the earliest was the grammar-translation approach, which consisted of two elements: grammar and lexical
knowledge. Learners were taught the grammatical rules together with the vocabulary of the target language, and everything was done in writing. There was no need for listening input as “[t]he grammar-translation approach viewed language as a descriptive set of finite rules that, once learned, gave access to the language” (p. 4). Next came the direct-method, which emphasized the need for learners to be orally exposed to the target language; however, no emphasis was put on teaching learners how to listen. The grammar-approach followed, where listening was an important part, “but listening exercises are treated as purely classroom-based activities, which usually have little or no relevance to the outside world” (p. 7). In the 1960’s, the audio-lingual approach became popular and the primary concern was correct pronunciation. Learners would listen to samples of “perfect” pronunciation and correct grammatical forms before trying to imitate the sample language.

More recently, with socio-cultural, co-operative and communicative teaching and learning at the forefront of L2 education, the primary goal of language teaching and learning is no longer to know every grammatical rule or perform perfect pronunciations. Instead, the emphasis has shifted from form to meaning and function. Students should be able to transfer and use what they hear and do in the classroom to real-life situations. In addition, today’s emphasis on being able to use the language in and for real-life situations and purposes helps illuminate the importance of implementing AM in ESL/EFL classrooms. Furthermore, Seidlhofer (2005) describes that English has become the primary lingua Franca (ELF) used for communication worldwide and that 75% of the English speakers are non-native speakers. Because of that, there is no longer a desire for a one and only “correct” pronunciation or grammatical system. Instead, today’s international perspective on communication means that teaching in the ESL/EFL classroom should aim for comprehensibility rather than a “correct” form of English.

2.3 Proponents and Opponents of Authentic Material
Several writers promote the general use of AM in ESL/EFL classrooms and point to the many advantages that AM brings to learners as well as teachers. McGrath (2002) and Gilmore (2004) argue that AM is important because it allows learners to connect to the world outside the classroom, which gets them accustomed to listen to native as well as L2 English speakers of varying proficiencies. This exposure in turn prepares learners’ for the interactions and situations they will encounter outside the classroom. Furthermore, Melvin and Stout (1987),
writing from their experience as language teachers, state that using AM leads to motivated students, and add that teachers and students alike are more stimulated by AM than IAM.

Other writers promote the use of AM specifically for listening lessons for a number of reasons. Devitt (1997) argues that “frequent repetition of vocabulary by native speakers is valuable as input on pronunciation, stress and other phonological features” (p. 466). Gilmore (2007) compares what he calls “[t]he contrived materials of traditional textbooks” with “[a]uthentic materials, particularly audio-visual ones, [which] offer a much richer source of input for learners and have the potential to be exploited in different ways and on different levels to develop learners’ communicative competence” (p. 103). That is, by implementing different kinds of AM, learners’ are introduced to language used by real speakers rather than scripted, graded and/or contrived material. This in turn better prepares learners for the language they will hear and use outside the L2 learning environment. Based on these advantages, which include interested and stimulated learners and a richer input with natural phonological features, it would seem that inclusion of AM in upper-secondary school listening lessons would increase learner motivation (see section 2.7 for more on this topic), and better prepare them for interactions outside of the ESL/EFL classroom.

Potential drawbacks of AM have also been described in the literature. Gilmore (2007) discusses the mismatch between textbook and authentic discourse and argues that even though AM can be interesting and motivating, AM is not in and of itself necessarily interesting and motivating. He points out that AM can be too difficult for learners as the AM might include unknown grammatical features or too many new words. Foppoli (2006) follows the same reasoning and adds that finding AM with an appropriate language level and difficulty as well as appropriate topics is very time consuming as opposed to IAM, which teachers can assume is appropriate in all regards as they are specifically designed for teaching and learning. In addition, one would expect that it is not only the finding of AM that is time consuming as teachers also have to listen to the material and design relevant exercises. Taylor (1994) discusses AM at great length and argues that AM in itself does not automatically mean a better learning opportunity for learners. Instead, he argues that “inauthentic language-using behaviour may well be effective language-learning behaviour” (p. 8, emphasis in original). To put it another way, Taylor (1994) suggests that a contrived, simplified and/or graded and scripted IAM may be adequate for teaching and learning purposes. Nonetheless, since IAM is different from the language used and heard in situations outside the ESL/EFL classroom (see
section 2.5 for more on this topic) this suggests that IAM will do a less than adequate job at preparing learners for the language they will encounter in real-life situations.

Adding to the complexity of AM, Taylor (1994) argues that “the language classroom has its own legitimacy, its own authenticity and reality, to which both learner and teachers contribute” (p. 10). Widdowson (1996) adds to the complexity and questions whether authenticity is even feasible at all in an ESL/EFL context as learners in these contexts are in fact not a part of an English-speaking community. Furthermore, Lundahl (2012) wonders whether any and all materials are automatically IAM when included in a textbook. For example, if a conversation in a textbook is between a hotel receptionist and a guest, one could argue that the material is still authentic, as it resembles a situation learners are likely to encounter in the “real world”. However, even though I agree that the language classroom has its own authenticity, and that a conversation in a textbook can resemble a conversation from outside of school, for the purposes of this essay, AM has to be introduced from sources other than textbooks and/or teaching and learning websites for them to classify as AM.

2.4 The Role of the Teacher

As suggested by the discussion above, using AM can lead to more motivated and stimulated learners, allow learners to use the language in and for meaningful purposes, and offer a potentially richer source of input, leading to the notion that an inclusion of AM can be of great value for L2 learners. However, as also previously indicated, no material teaches itself and any material, be it purpose-written or AM, can be put to good or poor use. It is teachers who are ultimately responsible not only for choosing which materials to include, but also for deciding how these materials are used. In other words, teachers have to choose appropriate AM, AM which is comprehensible but also includes new features just beyond the learner’s level (Krashen, 1982; 1985) or ZPD (Vygotsky, 1978). Furthermore, teachers also have to use the material in meaningful and interactive ways in order for the learners to acquire as much new knowledge of the target language as possible and align the material with SSE objectives.

To sum up, as Field (2008) suggests, if all the teacher does with the AM listening material is to employ traditional comprehension questions, then s/he is only interested in the product of listening. If teachers instead use AM listening material and focuses on the process of listening s/he prepares learners for communication and interaction in terms of rate of speech, unfiltered vocabulary and different accents and dialects, all elements that will help them listen in the
“real world”. Put another way, implementing AM in listening lessons equips learners with the listening skills required to participate and communicate in and for real-life purposes.

2.5 Purpose-Written vs. Authentic Material in Listening Lessons

Hedge (2000), drawing on several other studies, points out that the communication ratio in everyday life is generally as follows: 45% of communication time is spent listening, 30% speaking, 16% reading, and 9% writing. In other words, nearly half of all the time spent in communication is devoted to listening. Since listening is by far the skill most used in everyday communication, one would expect ESL/EFL teachers to emphasize and commit considerable class time to this. However, Hedge (2000), Field (2008), and Siegel (2013), all remark that traditionally, listening have been neglected or have received less attention than the other language skills. Since the early 2000’s, listening may be receiving more attention and one reason is “that contemporary society exhibits a shift away from printed media and towards sound, and its members therefore need to develop a high level of proficiency in listening” (Hedge, 2000, p. 228-229).

Two especially important and influential books contributed to this heightened attention towards listening in the language classroom: *Listening in the Language Classroom* (Field 2008), and *Second Language Listening* (Flowerdew & Miller 2005). Field’s (2008) primary argument is that teachers in general tend to focus on the product instead of the process of listening. That is, many teachers only employ comprehension questions connected to listening texts rather than teaching learners how to listen. In response to this situation, Field (2008) suggests “that we should match the type of listening required of the listener as closely as is practical to what would be expected in a real communicative context” (p. 63). Otherwise, as evidenced by the anecdote in the introduction, “we are not equipping her [the learner] to cope if and when she comes face to face with the target language in the outside world” (p. 276-277). In other words, particular types of listening are required for different types of input. For example, in a conversation, the listener needs to listen and respond, on a tour the listener only has to listen for the main points, but not respond and in a negotiation, the listener is required to understand details and respond and/or challenge those. Therefore, AM might be needed to better prepare learners for the different types of “real world” listening they are likely to encounter outside the ESL/EFL classroom.

Flowerdew and Miller (2005) illustrate several differences between input provided in textbooks and input learners will encounter outside the language-learning classroom. Two
examples are elisions (i.e. words that are left out or reduced), and assimilations, (i.e. where sounds and words are combined in an utterance), which are frequent in natural speech, but often avoided in textbooks where the sounds are presented in “their idealized citation forms” (p. 34). For example, “armoured car” is pronounced /ˈɑːməd ˈka:/ in its idealized form, but in natural speech it is likely to be assimilated as /ˈɑːməgˈka/. Likewise, “going to” in idealized form is pronounced /ˈɡoʊ.ɪŋ tuː/, but in natural speech it is often pronounced as “gonna” /ɡənə/. In addition, Flowerdew and Miller (2005) devote an entire chapter into analyzing listening activities in four ESL/EFL textbooks and conclude “that although the books analyzed are successful in some areas of listening skill development, teachers and students using these books may need to supplement the activities in the book” (p. 123). To do so, Flowerdew and Miller (2005) suggest that teachers examine the IAM listening materials in view of eight different dimensions. One example is the social dimension and the authors suggest that if the IAM is not centered on dialogue or if the tasks assigned to the IAM does not require learners to take on different roles (i.e. customer/clerk, guest/receptionist) for example, then the teachers should supplement the material and/or tasks accordingly.

Gilmore (2004) also analyzes differences between interactions in AM and IAM and observes that listening materials in textbooks are different from natural conversations. He identifies several differences, which he suggests can have negative effects as the IAM might not satisfactory prepare learners for the interactions they are likely to encounter in the world outside of the language-learning classroom. In his analysis he found that false starts, repetitions, pauses, and hesitations, to name a few, occur at a much greater frequency in AM than in IAM. Gilmore (2004) concludes by writing, “if our learners’ goal is to be able to operate independently in the L2 outside of the classroom, then at some point they have to be shown the true nature of conversation” (p. 371). This line of argument indicates that IAM do a less than adequate job at preparing learners for the listening they will be confronted with in the world outside the ESL/EFL classroom. Thus, AM may be needed to fill the gap.

McGrath’s (2002) work mentioned earlier, as well as Lundahl (2012), also discuss textbooks and argue that no textbook can be seen or treated as the only material needed to fulfill the goals and aims of a language course. Both authors argue that teachers have the responsibility to evaluate the textbook and pinpoint its shortcomings in regards to learners’ needs and interests, and in regards to the aims and goals in the syllabus. Therefore, supplementations for textbook listening materials are crucial aspects in the language-learning classroom. To do this, McGrath (2002) suggests teachers implement AM in their teaching
since they contain “the language of real people. To understand and to make them [native speakers] understand, we [L2 speakers] must know this language” (p. 138). Implementing AM in listening lessons will not only better prepare learners for interactions outside the L2 learning environment, but also allow teachers to satisfy several directives in the SSE better than they could with IAM.

2.6 Authentic Material, Listening and the Subject Syllabus for English

Teachers in the Swedish education system have the responsibility to teach in accordance with the SSE set out by the Ministry of Education (2011). Implementing AM from different parts of the world in listening lessons can help fulfill several of the directives outlined therein and can possibly do so better than IAM. First, it can introduce students to “[s]poken language, also with different social and dialect features” (p. 3). That is, even though textbook assigned audio material may provide a few samples of different English dialects, by using AM, many, if not all dialects can be introduced in class.

Second, AM can help “students to develop knowledge of language and the surrounding world so that they have the ability, desire and confidence to use English in different situations and for different purposes” (p. 1). The confidence and desire to use English is likely to be affected by other factors than whether learners are exposed to AM or textbooks, as this has more to do with internal factors such as anxiety and nervousness. The ability to understand the different types of English present in the world on the other hand, as evidenced by the anecdote in the introduction, can be greatly improved if learners are exposed to AM, and they can be notably hindered if not.

Third, AM has the possibility to provide students with “[t]exts of different kinds and for different purposes” (p. 3) as well as “[c]oherent spoken language and conversations of different kinds, such as debates, lectures and interviews” (p. 7). This is not to argue that different types of texts are not included in textbooks as well; however, AM can provide a better opportunity for exposing learners to the natural speech in these different kinds of texts, rather than the contrived, simplified, and unnatural speech present in many textbooks (Gilmore 2004).

Fourth, using AM from different parts of the world can help the student become familiar with “[l]iving conditions, attitudes, values and traditions, as well as social, political and cultural conditions in different contexts and parts of the world where English is used” (p. 3). Put another way, textbooks designed and produced in Sweden, for the Swedish educational
Finally, by including AM teachers can provide “subject areas related to students’ education and societal and working life; current issues; thoughts, opinions, ideas, experiences and feelings; ethical and existential issues” (p. 7). In other words, textbooks can probably do a good job at providing subject areas related to learners educational lives, and perhaps working lives, but no textbook can cater to every learners’ societal life, and even less to every learners’ opinions, experiences, feelings etc. Allowing learners to use AM, on the other hand, allows him or her to engage with material that is relevant and important to that specific learner.

2.7 Research in the Field
Research in the field includes studies from different perspectives. In this section, research into teacher and learner attitudes toward AM will be presented first. Next will be studies on the effects of AM for learners’ listening comprehension, and finally research into the effects of AM on learner’s communicative competence will be presented and discussed.

Some researchers have studied teacher and learner attitudes toward AM and found that inclusion of AM seems to be beneficial to L2 learners. Alshaikhi and Madini (2016) studied teacher attitudes toward AM. Their study included questionnaire responses (n=57) designed to extract teacher attitudes toward AM. The results showed that teachers felt “that curriculum assigned audio tracks are insufficient to improve students’ listening comprehension [because the] curriculum [assigned material] did not explicitly teach any listening skills or sub-skills” (p. 44). In addition, Alshaikhi and Madini (2016) found that teachers believe AM connects better to the learners’ real-life and interests, which made them more interesting than IAM.

Bacon and Finneman (1990) studied whether learners believe they are more motivated by AM in listening lessons. Their results were based on questionnaire responses (n=100) and the researchers conclude that “[s]ince exposure to authentic input has a positive perceived effect on comprehension and satisfaction and a negative perceived effect on frustration, students seem to profit from its inclusion” (p. 469). Likewise, Zhafarghandi and Barekat (2014) also studied attitudes towards AM in listening lessons, and interviewed both learners and teachers. Their study included interviews with students (n=80) and teachers (n=30). Their findings showed that teachers believe that AM connects better to the learners’ real-life, increased their motivation, and improved their speaking ability. Moreover, this study also revealed that
students had positive attitudes toward AM as students believed that AM were more beneficial for out of class situations as it “introduced how to use language in the real world” (p. 192). The study also showed that students believed that AM had positive effects on their speaking, grammar, and vocabulary proficiency. Combining this data, shows that teachers and students have positive attitudes toward AM because students and teachers alike believe AM bring many advantages and benefits to L2 learners.

Several other researchers have studied the effect of AM on learners’ listening comprehension. Barekat and Nobakti (2014) randomly divided students (n=60) into two groups: one experimental group that only used AM, and one control group that only used IAM. Pre- and a post-tests were administered and the results showed that AM “are more effective than inauthentic materials in improving the listening comprehension ability of EFL learners at the intermediate level” (p. 1063). Ghaderpanahi (2012) conducted a similar study including students (n=60) but between the pre- and post-tests students were instructed in skills such as “note-taking, following signpost words and being aware of stress, rhythm, and intonation” (p. 149). The results showed that AM greatly improved learners’ listening comprehension. However, it is not entirely clear if this improvement was due to the inclusion of AM or if the improvement was because the students had been taught several listening strategies between the pre- and post-tests. Sersen’s (2011) study involved students (n=64) where the participants listened to AM defined by the researcher as “snippets of English conversation of the type which a native English speaker would use with another native English speaker” (p. 493). During two semesters, eight listening comprehension tests were administered where the researcher read aloud and the participants answered 30 questions connected to the text. The study revealed major improvements on learners’ listening comprehension, especially during the first semester, and the researcher concluded that “[t]his finding would hence appear to underscore the importance of exposure to native or near-native accents during early stages of the English-language sound-recognition learning experience” (p. 498). In sum, several studies have shown that AM can have a positive effect on L2 learners’ listening comprehension.

Other studies have shown that AM can have positive effects not only on listening skills but also on other communicative skills. Bahrani and Sim (2012) randomly divided low-level language learners (n=60) into three groups where one group watched news clips, a second group cartoons, and a third group films. The study involved a pre- and a post-test to study learners’ language proficiency. Learners in group one showed minor improvements on the
post-test; however, both the second and the third groups greatly improved their scores on the post-test. Therefore, the researchers concluded that AM is beneficial for low-level learners and suggest that including AM, especially cartoons and films, can improve learners’ language proficiency. Weyers (1999) studied the effect of AM on learners (n=37) using both a listening comprehension and an oral production test. Learners were divided into two groups: one control and one experimental. Both groups followed the standard curriculum and in addition, the experimental group watched four ten-minute soap-opera episodes per week. The results showed that AM not only increased learners’ listening comprehension, but it also had positive effects on two other aspects of the learners’ communicative competence, namely “their confidence in generating output and the scope and breadth of their discourse” (p. 339). Thus, AM seems to offer learners many advantages, and these are not strictly confined to listening.

The sections above have provided a synthesized description of AM based on different definitions of AM available in the field. Likewise, proponents and opponents of AM have been presented and discussed. Based on this background, it would seem that implementing AM in listening lessons in Swedish upper-secondary schools could be beneficial to L2 learners and teachers despite possible drawbacks (e.g. time and energy on the teacher’s part).

2.8 Research Questions

It would seem that including AM in Swedish upper-secondary schools could have many advantages. Through AM students can be exposed to the natural and everyday language needed to function in the world outside the ESL/EFL classroom, particularly in terms of listening. Moreover, since research has demonstrated that students find AM more motivating than IAM, one would expect that an inclusion of AM could lead to a better classroom climate where students are motivated and willing to learn English. In addition, by using AM, teachers can likely satisfy many of the demands in the SSE better than with IAM. Based on this situation, I decided to investigate the issue through the following RQs:

1: What are the attitudes toward AM in listening lessons amongst practicing teachers of English in Swedish upper-secondary schools?

2: Do teachers use AM in their listening lessons, and if so, why?

   Based on my personal experience as a student and a pre-service teacher, I believe that teachers have positive attitudes towards using AM in their listening lessons because AM not only does a better job at meeting the goals and aims in the syllabus, but they also prepare
learners for communication and interaction outside of school better than purpose-written materials. Therefore, this project also sought to test that hypothesis (H) in light of the views of practicing teachers. The following section outlines procedures for addressing the RQs and H.

3. Methodology
To address the RQs and examine the tentative H, the present study combined two separate data collection instruments. First, a questionnaire was distributed, and second, follow-up interviews were conducted in connection with replies on the questionnaire. The aim of the questionnaire was to collect quantitative data regarding teachers’ attitudes toward AM. As suggested by Dörnyei and Csizér (2012), data collected from questionnaires allows the researcher to make inferences about larger populations and that a questionnaire is often used to extract opinions and/or attitudes, which was the aim of this project. The aim of the interview was to extract a more in-depth and personal view from teachers; therefore, the interviews were semi-structured as suggested by Dörnyei (2007) meaning that they included an interview guide based on the responses on the questionnaire, but the participants (P) were also invited to elaborate and expand during the interview.

3.1 Participants
The Ps were all English teachers at different upper-secondary schools in Sweden. The questionnaire was personally distributed via email to 29 teachers, and in addition it was distributed on a FACEBOOK (®) group called “Engelska för gymnasielärare” (English for upper-secondary teachers, my translation) whose members were Swedish upper-secondary English teachers. Ten teachers responded to the questionnaire, and interviews were conducted with two teachers. The Ps were two male and eight female teachers, and each P was assigned a pseudonym that matched his/her gender.

3.2 Research Instruments
The questionnaire (Appendix A) was created using the questionnaire option in Microsoft Office Word 2007 (®), and the document was protected and limited so that the Ps were restricted from editing it. Before the questionnaire was distributed amongst practicing teachers of English, it was piloted with a pre-service English teacher, who provided feedback. The feedback was primarily positive and the overall impression was that the questionnaire was clear, understandable and had a user-friendly layout. However, the piloting revealed the
need for minor revisions such as changes in word choice, the sequencing of questions, and instructions for using the “free-text boxes”. Revisions were subsequently made, and a description for how to use the “free-text boxes” was added into the introductory email.

The questionnaire was followed by interviews (Appendix B), which were digitally recorded and transcribed. The interview focused on three specific aspects: attitudes towards AM in listening lessons, why s/he had chosen to include AM, if indeed they had, and how and why AM may or may not allow her/him to better meet specific demands in the SSE than they could with IAM. Both interviewees requested that the interview be conducted in Swedish and as a result, I have translated the interview excerpts and findings into English.

4. Results / Findings
In this section, quantitative results from the questionnaire responses are presented first, followed by qualitative findings extracted during the interviews.

4.1 Quantitative Results
The questionnaire contained 22 multiple-choice options (see Appendix A). The first question asked Ps to declare how many years they had been teaching English. Results showed that 80% had been teaching for nine years or more. Question 3 asked Ps to mark their view on how well they believe they were trained to teach listening lessons when they studied to become English language teachers. The results showed that 10% agreed that they had received adequate training, and that 80% either disagreed or strongly disagreed. On the final question, Ps were asked to mark whether they agreed to be interviewed and only two agreed. The remaining 19 questions were designed to elicit teachers’ attitudes toward listening, AM, materials in listening lessons, and AM in relation to specific goals and demands in the SSE. The sections below outline the quantitative results.

4.1.1 Teachers’ Attitudes: Listening
Attitudes toward listening were studied through four items. First Ps were asked to rank the language skills (listening, reading, speaking, and writing) 1-4 where 1 equaled most important for learner development and 4, least important. As seen in figure 1, 10% believed that listening is the most important skill; however, 60% marked listening as the second most important skill for learner development. This result suggests that teachers believe listening lessons are and should be an important part in the ESL/EFL classroom.
Figure 1. Teachers’ attitudes toward the importance of listening for learner development

Moreover, as shown in figure 2, all the Ps either strongly agreed or agreed that listening lessons are equally important as lessons for the other language skills. Likewise, all Ps either disagreed or strongly disagreed that listening comes naturally and does not need to be taught in the language-learning classroom, indicating that teachers believe that listening lessons are not only important, but also that listening is a skill that students need to be trained in and therefore can be supported with explicit instruction.

Figure 2. Teachers’ attitudes toward listening

One final question was designed to extract attitudes toward listening and here Ps were asked to mark which type of material they believed is more beneficial to students in upper-secondary school. All of the Ps marked that AM is more beneficial than IAM. Ps were also asked to motivate their response, and Paula wrote that AM is “more likely to be more current issues, topics etc. that might be interesting to students.” Other motivations for why AM is
more beneficial included statements such as, AM are “more challenging” (Helena) and “AM is more suitable and can be linked to your students programme, interests and/or future working life” (Robin). Irene wrote, “It depends totally on what you aim for and what materials you use”, suggesting that AM in itself is no guarantee for a successful lesson; instead, it is up to the teacher to put the material to good use.

4.1.2 Teachers’ Attitudes: Authentic Materials
Seven questions explored teachers’ attitudes toward AM. No one either strongly agreed or agreed that it is difficult to use AM to teach listening: 40% of marked neutral, and 60% either disagreed or strongly disagreed as indicated in figure 3. In addition, Ps were asked to motivate their answer, and Sara wrote, “It’s not difficult, but it requires planning. WHAT to use, WHY and HOW to introduce and follow up” (emphasis in original). Jenny’s motivation followed the same reasoning when she remarked that “It’s [AM] everywhere and easy to create lessons from.” These quotes suggest that using AM for listening lessons is not viewed as a problem or concern amongst the teachers in this study. They also reiterate the idea that no material teaches itself, it is up to the teacher to use the material wisely in the ESL/EFL classroom.

![Q6-9: Attitudes toward AM](image)

Figure 3. Teachers’ attitudes toward AM

The question regarding whether it is time consuming to find appropriate AM on the other hand, as seen in figure 3, shows that 70% of the Ps either strongly agreed or agreed, indicating that finding appropriate AM is time consuming and the biggest concern according to the teachers in this study. Furthermore, a majority of the Ps, as demonstrated in figure 3, strongly agreed or agreed that AM is more motivating and interesting to students suggesting that teachers believe they will have more motivated and interested students in the language-
learning classroom if AM is implemented. During presentation of interview findings (see section 4.2.2), the relationship between interest and motivation is discussed in more detail.

Three additional questions also aimed at elucidating attitudes toward AM in listening lessons. First, Ps were asked to answer whether they used AM or not and all teachers in this study use AM. Second, as shown in table 1, newscasts and TED-talks were the most used with 90% each, closely followed by the 80% who used songs in their listening lessons. Finally, Ps were asked to motivate why they had chosen to include AM in their listening lessons, and as displayed in table 2, appropriate topic(s) and whether or not the teacher finds the AM interesting are the most important factors when teachers decide which AM to include.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AM</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Motivation for Using AM</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Newscasts</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>Appropriate topic(s)</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TED-Talks</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>I find them more interesting</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Songs</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>Students find AM more interesting than IAM</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Podcasts</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>Connect better to the world outside of school</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviews</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>To satisfy demands in the syllabus</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speeches</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>Appropriate language level</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cartoons</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>I do not have access to textbooks</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Movies</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TV-Series</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vlogs</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Documentary</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2. Reasons for AM in listening lessons

Table 1. Preferred AMs

4.1.3 Teachers’ Attitudes: Materials in Listening Lessons

As displayed in figure 4, no teachers in this study either strongly agreed or agreed that they preferred IAM in their listening lessons; in contrast, the majority of Ps, (60%), disagreed that they preferred IAM. Fifty per cent of the Ps either strongly agreed or agreed that IAM listening materials are different from real-life conversations. Only 20% of the teachers agreed that IAM listening materials would not adequately prepare students for interactions and conversations outside of school. In other words, the greater part of the teachers in this study prefers to use AM in their listening lessons.
This result shows that AM is the preferred material in listening lessons and that the main reason for using AM in listening lessons is that IAM are different from real-life conversations.

The last question in regard to teachers’ attitudes towards materials in listening lessons asked Ps to mark which type material best describes their choice for listening lessons. The results showed that 80% preferred a combination of AM and IAM, and that 20% preferred using only AM in their listening lessons.

**4.1.4 Teachers’ Attitudes: Authentic Material and the Subject Syllabus for English**

Four items aimed to elicit teachers’ attitudes on whether or not AM can fulfill goals and demands in the SSE better than IAM. As evidenced in figure 5, 60% of the Ps indicated neutral on whether AM is better at presenting students with different dialects suggesting that the majority of teachers believe that different dialects can be presented equally well with AM as with IAM. Thirty per cent of the Ps believed that AM is superior at presenting different dialects. The question regarding whether AM is better at illustrating attitudes, values, traditions and social issues showed a similar result, as 50% of the Ps marked neutral and 40% either strongly agreed or agreed that AM is better. Furthermore, 40% of the teachers in this study agreed that AM is better at introducing different types of texts, and 30% each marked neutral and disagreed. Finally, 70% of the Ps either strongly agreed or agreed that AM is superior to IAM at incorporating subjects related to students’ societal and working life. In combination, these results suggest that teachers believe that AM is at least equally good as, and in some areas slightly better than IAM to fulfill goals and demands in the SSE.
4.2 Qualitative Findings

Two Ps agreed to be interviewed in connection to the questionnaire. The first interviewee, Paula, had been teaching English for nine years or more and taught English primarily on theoretical programs such as the Social Studies Programme and Science Programme. The second interviewee, Robin, had been teaching for three to five years and he taught primarily vocational programs, especially the Electrical Engineering Programme and Vehicle Engineering Programme.

4.2.1 Advantages and Disadvantages of Authentic Material

The interview began when I asked the P to describe advantages and disadvantages of AM and IAM and Paula argued, “there are many advantages because it [AM] can be perceived as more real which makes it easier to assimilate. If a student is interested in for example cars, and you [the teacher] can find material about that then it can feel more meaningful to students.”

Likewise, Robin said, “I see many more advantages than disadvantages with AM. One is that you can connect the material to the programme the students are attending and their interests. […] and by doing that it becomes a lot easier for students to understand what is being said.”

Paula added that with AM “you can connect to something students have seen or heard about, some current news […] or during the election campaigns in the US for example, you can get a lot of exciting material to work with.” In other words, both interviewees agreed that AM has many advantages and that AM is more likely to be more interesting to students than IAM.
Paula described one disadvantage with AM can be that “it is difficult to know if the material is at a suitable level for the learners” and Robin agreed that “it can be difficult to find something at a perfect level for, for example English 5”. In addition, Robin said:

One problem with AM, when you create your own questions and tasks connected to the material, is that it is very time consuming to make sure it matches the syllabus. With IAM, you do not have to do that as they [IAMs] are already connected to the syllabus […] but all IAM that I have used have the same type of voice, the same voice that is present on the national tests, sounds kind of like a robot, as someone is sitting in a quiet room reading from a text. That is what I want to avoid […] as the language students are going to encounter through film or when they are abroad will be of a normal conversation character, and that is of course a downside with IAM listening materials.

Both Paula and Robin claimed that finding AM at a suitable level could be challenging as well as time consuming. However, both interviewees agreed that AM is more likely to be interesting to students and because of that interest, students are more likely to, in Paula’s words, “get something out of it” and that the students “will likely not forget what they have learned as soon as they step out of the classroom.”

4.2.2 Interest and Motivation with Authentic Material

Robin explained his view on motivation and interest when he said:

[Motivation is] I [the student] will do this even though it is not the most enjoyable thing in the world. Partly because I will show [Robin] respect and do what he tells me, and I am doing this even though I do not think it is enjoyable because I have to get a grade, and I am doing this even though I do not think it is enjoyable because it is good for me. Interest, on the other hand, is when you do something because it is fun and interesting, and if it is not interesting, one might not do anything at all.

When asked if motivation or interest is more important for learner development Robin argued, “in order to get life-long learning, and not simply get good grades in upper-secondary, interest is the most important factor.” In contrast, Paula described, “interest is when you want to hear or read more about something, and then you can get motivated; however, some students are motivated from the beginning even though they are not interested at all”. When she was asked which was more important she replied, “it must be motivation, otherwise they [the students] will not be able to keep at it and put in the required effort.” To put it another way, to Paula the more important factor is motivation, which has to do with internal factors such as self-efficacy
and determination, which most students in her classes possess. Robin is more concerned with interest as many of his students lack the above-mentioned internal factors.

One reason for this discrepancy between Robin and Paula might be that Robin primarily teaches vocational programs and Paula teaches theoretical programs. As Robin said, “since I have had many underperforming, unmotivated and tired students who cannot understand why they should learn English, I have had to focus on their interests and make explicit that we are doing this because you [the student] will need it in your future working life”. In contrast, Paula’s students are motivated from the beginning and as she pointed out, “even though there is nothing that interests them in a task, they are still motivated as they want to learn more English.” As a result, it seems natural that Robin believes interest is more important and that Paula argues that motivation is more important.

4.2.3 Authentic Material and the Subject Syllabus for English

Four interview questions sought to develop how and why AM may or may not allow the interviewee to better meet specific demands in the SSE than they could with IAM. Paula agreed that she could introduce different dialects better with AM and motivated her answer: “sometimes I think that [different dialects] are missing in IAM” and argued, “it is important to cover many different dialects […] because sometimes there is an interview with for example, an Australian on the national test”. Robin disagreed that he could introduce different dialects better with AM; however, during the interview he remarked, “well, it is a lot more work for me if I have to search and find different dialects but you could of course find many more dialects if you sat down and started to search for them.” This response induced the following statement from the interviewer, “so it is not that IAM are better, rather that the work-load is less for you when using IAM?” to which Robin quickly replied “yes”. Put another way, both Paula and Robin agreed that AM is superior when it comes to introducing different dialects, but Robin felt that he did not have time to find different dialects himself and as a result he used the textbook and other IAM at his disposal. Paula on the other hand, did not believe different dialects were presented adequately in the IAM that she used.

Robin also disagreed that he could introduce different types of texts better with AM than he could with IAM and motivated his response, “there is already a great variation in the textbook I am using but of course, this also has to do with the work-load mentioned before”. This suggests that he knew that he could probably introduce different types of texts with AM but he preferred using the readymade formats available in the textbook he used. Paula,
instead, agreed that she could introduce different types of texts better with AM. She argued that “you can find different types [of AM] such as videos or TED-talks connected to the theme or area you are working on in the classroom […] and that means that you can vary your lessons and find something that suits all 27 [students], their abilities and interests.” That is, Paula was more positive towards AM as a source for introducing different types of texts, whereas Robin relied on his textbook, (i.e. his IAM), to meet that requirement in the SSE.

As for the question of whether AM is better at introducing subjects related to students’ societal and working life, both Robin and Paula agreed that AM is better than IAM. Robin’s reply was, “of course!” and Paula responded, “there is so much material available on the internet […] you can find all kinds, both written but also other things such as interviews or lectures.” In addition, Paula remarked that with AM “you can direct the material so it is suitable for different programs.” In other words, both Paula and Robin suggested that AM are better than IAM at introducing topics and subjects related to students’ societal and/or future working lives.

The next question was if the interviewees believed that AM is better at making students familiar with attitudes, values, traditions and social issues in different parts of the world than IAM. Paula agreed and argued, “when using for example five-minute news from BBC, I can connect to for example the war in Syria even though I might not know so much about it myself.” Robin instead disagreed and argued that “textbook writers have taken great care to that exact quote, so it makes it difficult to find something better yourself. On the other hand, many of the AM I am using also fulfill that demand, but maybe not as good as the textbook.” In sum, both Paula and Robin were positive towards AM and Paula felt she could connect to attitudes, values, traditions and social issues from different parts of the easy with AM. Contrary, Robin felt that textbooks probably do a better job than he could do himself. This might be caused by the fact that Paula had more experience as a teacher than Robin.

The final aspect in connection to the SSE was that one of the requirements in English 5 as well as English 6 requires teachers to involve current issues. The interviewees were asked which type of material they use to do that. Paula responded that she used AM such as “videos, TED-talks or newscasts from the internet, especially videos because then the students can both hear and see and that makes it easier for them to follow and understand.” This response was met by the following question from the interviewer, “so my interpretation of that answer is that it is not the textbook or other IAM that is your primary source for dealing with current issues?” To which Paula replied, “no it is not, unless you happen to know that a certain
textbook [IAM] includes something about for example Syria, but no, it is the internet [AM].”

Robin disagreed to the statement and said:

When it is closely connected to the course plan and core content [in the SSE] I rely on IAM to make sure what I am presenting is accurate and objective. However, I always mix it up with AM so that it is up-to-date and suits as many students as possible. Also, you have to be careful with AM and how you yourself feel about current issues because it is close to impossible to be objective […] I have a very strong opinion about Donald Trump and that might make me biased and not present an objective view.

As shown above, Paula and Robin both used AM to deal with current issues in the classroom. Paula was comfortable in using AM and her primary source was AM. Robin was more careful and relied on IAM to make sure that what was presented was accurate and objective. Again, this might be because Paula was more experienced as a teacher than Robin.

5. Discussion

The results and findings have shown that teachers have more positive than negative attitudes toward AM. Some of the data is in line with the H presented earlier, yet other data suggests differently. In the following sections, the RQs and H will be discussed in terms of general trends, and surprising findings. After that, the discussion will move to the limitations of the study before implications for future research and teaching are presented.

5.1 RQ1: Attitudes toward Authentic Material in Listening Lessons

The present study revealed that a majority of the Ps believed listening is the most important or second most important factor for language development. This corresponds with Hedge’s (2002) remark that a high proficiency in listening is important and required in today’s society. Moreover, this study has shown that teachers view listening lessons are equally important as lessons where reading, writing and/or speaking are at the forefront. In addition, according to the teachers in this study, listening is not something that comes naturally; instead, L2 learners need to be trained in how to listen just as Flowerdew and Miller (2005) and Field (2008) suggest. This indicates that teachers have positive attitudes toward listening lessons and that listening is viewed as a skill that needs attention in the ESL/EFL classroom.

Likewise, the study showed that a majority of the teachers believed AM to be more beneficial for learners than IAM and that AM connects better to the learners’ life outside of school and to their interests. This result correlates with the findings by Zhafarghandi and
Barekat (2014) and Alshaikhi and Madini (2016), whose studies showed that teachers as well as students believe AM are more beneficial as they connect better to the world outside of school. Additionally, none of the teachers in this study believed it is difficult to use AM in listening lessons but a majority argued that it is time consuming. This result is in line with Foppoli’s (2006) remark that finding and using AM can be time consuming. However, since more than half of the teachers believed that AM is more beneficial and that all of the teachers used AM in listening lessons, the study has shown that overall, teachers of English in upper-secondary schools have positive attitudes toward AM in listening lessons. In other words, finding appropriate AM seems the biggest concern amongst the participating teachers of this study. To address this concern, I would suggest that teachers register with one of the English language teacher groups on FACEBOOK (®) (see Appendix C for suggestions) where they can ask for and share AMs and related exercises.

Finally, the interviews disclosed a surprising finding, as I would have expected that Robin, who had been through the teacher education programme more recently, would have had more convincingly positive attitudes toward AM than Paula, who had attended the teacher education programme more than ten years ago. On the contrary, the interview showed that Paula had nothing but positive attitudes toward AM whereas Robin was more cautious with AM and relied more on textbooks and other IAM. This finding might suggest that a less experienced teacher relies more on textbooks and IAM, whereas an experienced teacher has more faith in his/her own ability to put AM to effective use in the ESL/EFL classroom. To put it another way, age and experience might be factors that affect whether or not a teacher uses AM or not in his/her listening lessons. In addition, this finding might have to do with the amount of time pre-service teachers are involved in analyses, seminars and discussions of IAM (i.e. textbooks), compared to AM, during the teacher education programmes. In order to make less experienced teachers more comfortable in using AM in listening lessons, I would suggest that a course concerned with how to find, plan, teach and assess AM for listening lessons be included in teacher education programmes.

5.2 RQ2: Reasons for Using Authentic Materials in Listening Lessons
The present study showed that all of the participating teachers used AM in their listening lessons and that none of the participating teachers preferred IAM in their listening lessons. In connection to that, a majority of the teachers argued, as McGrath (2002) and Gilmore (2004) suggest, that students find AM more interesting and motivating, and that AM connects better
to the world outside of school. However, teachers disagreed that AM does a better job at preparing learners for the interaction and communication they will face in and for real-life situations and purposes. This suggests that teachers’ notions of the connection to the world outside the classroom might have to with content rather than language. That is, teachers do not agree with McGrath (2002) and Gilmore (2004), who argue that AM makes learners’ accustomed to listen to native as well as foreign speakers of English, which in turn prepares learners for interactions and situations they will encounter outside the classroom. In light of the anecdote presented in the introduction (not being able to understand native or L2 speakers of English), I agree with McGrath (2002) and Gilmore (2004). Therefore, I would argue that, despite the findings in this study, AM will do a better job at preparing learners for the different types of English they will encounter outside the language-learning classroom.

Moreover, the interviews revealed a difference in opinions regarding student interest and student motivation. Paula who primarily taught motivated students on theoretical programmes believed that students were more motivated by AM than IAM. Robin, who taught vocational programmes, argued that finding AM that students perceived as interesting was the more important factor. In addition, when Robin was asked if he thought there were any differences between low-level and high-level learners he remarked, “I think both groups [low-level and high-level] appreciate if you implement AM that suits them and is connected to their program; however, high-level learners are motivated anyway so they will do whatever you tell them to do.” Paula’s perception is in line with the findings from Melvin and Stout (1987) and Bacon and Finneman (1990), as the findings in both studies suggest that AM can be beneficial for learner motivation. Likewise, Robin’s belief that low-level learners benefit from an inclusion of interesting AM corresponds to Bahrani and Sim’s (2012) findings as they showed that AM is beneficial for low-level L2 learners. Therefore, AM seems to be beneficial for high-level as well low-level learners’; and as a result, all teachers of English in the Swedish educational system should consider making AM an integral part of their listening lessons.

Furthermore, both interviewees agreed that inclusion of AM in listening lessons has many advantages, primarily because AM can be connected to learner interests and the different programmes better than IAM. Paula discussed differences between AM and IAM and stated that she felt that “textbooks often make things too easy, or handle subjects too shallowly” and argued that “with AM, you can go deeper”, meaning that she could offer her students what Gilmore (2007) refers to as richer input with AM than she could with IAM. In connection to that point, Paula argued with AM “they [students] are more engaged, they have more to say
and can discuss matters at greater length or and go in on more details.” This finding is similar to the findings of Weyers (1999), who found that an inclusion of AM in listening lessons has positive effects in terms of length and quality on the output produced by learners.

Finally, two surprising findings were revealed in connection to why teachers had chosen to include AM in their listening lessons. First, that the most important aspect in choosing AM was that teachers find them more interesting than IAM. In contrast, just over half of the teachers felt that students found AM more interesting, suggesting that teachers believe it is more important that they find the material interesting rather than that the students find it interesting. One could have expected, as they are teachers responsible for teaching learners a second language, that the primary concern would be if students find the material interesting or not. Second, as evidenced by the anecdote in the introduction, I would have expected that many teachers believed that IAM did a less than adequate job of preparing learners for interactions outside of school. Contrary to my expectation, the participating teachers in this study disagreed.

5.3 Examining Original Hypothesis
In addition to the two RQs, the present study also sought to explore the extent to which “teachers have positive attitudes towards using AM in their listening lessons because AM not only does a better job at meeting the goals and aims in the SSE, but they also prepare learners for communication and interaction outside of school better than purpose-written materials.”

The second part of the H is connected to the above discussion and I would have expected that teachers have positive attitudes toward AM in listening lessons because AM does a better job at preparing learners for communication and interaction outside of school. However, as evidenced above the teachers in this study disagreed that AM is superior. Instead, most teachers believed that IAM is at least as effective as AM.

Neither the first part of the H, which hypothesized that AM is better at meeting goals and aims in the SSE, was found to be not entirely accurate, as teachers only believed that AM was superior to IAM in one of the four areas. On the other hand, a majority of the teachers preferred using AM and believed that AM was more beneficial to learners. This suggests a conflict between the goals and aims in the SSE and teachers’ beliefs but since teachers must assess and grade students based on the knowledge requirements in the SSE, this finding is logical. Likewise, since professional writers compose textbooks with the SSE in mind, there is no surprise teachers feel that IAM does an adequate job at fulfilling these goals and aims.
As evidenced by the above discussion, the H I began with was found to be inaccurate. A more suitable H, based on the results and findings in this study would have been “teachers have positive attitudes towards using AM in their listening lessons not only because AM are more beneficial for learners but also because AM can be aligned with student programmes and interests better than purpose-written materials.” Thus, based on survey and interview findings, the H can be revised to more closely align with Swedish upper-secondary school English teachers' current thinking on AM.

5.4 Limitations
Because only ten teachers responded to the questionnaire and only two teachers agreed to be interviewed, this is a small-scale study focused at a rather limited geographical area in Sweden; therefore, generalizability is limited. Moreover, the present study only investigated attitudes toward AM; therefore, it does not provide any examples of AMs to use in listening lessons. Likewise, this study does not offer any suggestions for how to plan, teach and/or assess listening lessons that includes AM. Furthermore, only teacher attitudes were examined (i.e. not student attitudes), meaning that this study sheds no light on student perspectives. Suggestions for addressing these and other limitations are presented below.

5.5 Implications for Future Research
This study investigated teacher attitudes toward AM in listening lessons, and many areas of potential interest were generated during the project. Future research may examine teacher attitudes toward AM in reading, writing and/or speaking lessons. In addition, future research may investigate student attitudes toward AM, both in listening lessons but also in connection to the other language skills. Moreover, this research study suggests that there might be differences in attitudes toward AM between teachers at vocational programmes and teachers at theoretical programmes; therefore, future research may study if there indeed are differences between them. This study also suggests that there might be differences in attitudes toward AM between experienced and inexperienced teachers, and future research may study this relationship in more detail. Furthermore, future research may investigate how listening lessons that include AM are planned, taught and assessed. Finally, both interviewees highlighted the obligation to prepare students for the national tests; therefore, future research may investigate and analyze national tests to help teachers better prepare their students for the listening tasks at the national tests.
5.6 Implications for Teaching

First, the findings of this study indicated that teachers believe AM to be beneficial for L2 learners’ language development, the scope and quality of their output produced, and that AM can be connected and directed to learners’ programme and interests; therefore, AM should be implemented in L2 listening lessons. Based on that notion, I suggest that teachers implement a variety of AM with different types of language (i.e. formal, informal, colloquial, etc.) and different dialects and accents. Doing so will expand not only vocabulary and grammatical forms but it will also expose learners to the different types of English present in the world. However, in a class of perhaps 25 individuals it is unlikely that all learners share the same interests. To accommodate the different interests teachers could include something related to history in one listening lesson, something related to sports in another and so on, and then repeat the cycle. Thereby, each student will get several opportunities to work with something they find interesting at different points during their education.

Second, the study showed that AM could be of special value for low-level learners as the increased interest leads to motivation, motivation that the low-level learners are unlikely to achieve with traditional IAM listening materials. Therefore, I suggest that teachers teaching unmotivated and low-level learners should implement AM to a great extent in their listening lessons. With this group of learners, it is probably even more important to find AM that the individual learner deems interesting and a suggestion could be to allow learners to choose their own AM to work with during listening lessons. For example, learners could locate their own video clip and then watch/listen to it before retelling a classmate what the clip was about, or summarize key points, etc. Low-level learners might thus find the motivation they need to expand their listening, as well as overall language proficiency.

Finally, even though the study has shown that teachers view finding and planning how to use AM as time consuming, it has also shown that teachers believe that learners are more interested in and motivated by AM, suggesting that an inclusion of AM in listening lessons leads to a classroom climate with favorable conditions for language acquisition and learning. As suggested above, if teachers share their AMs, tasks and exercises with each other, the burden of finding and planning the material will become less time consuming.

6. Conclusion

The present study as well as earlier research has shown that AM is beneficial not only for learners listening skills but also their overall communicative competence and the breadth and
quality of their discourse. Since the present study has revealed that all the participating
teachers use AM in their listening lessons, students today are likely to be better prepared for
the listening required in the “real world” than students were in the past.

Moreover, the participating teachers in this study are positive about implementing AM in
their listening lessons, but not because they believe AM can help them fulfill goals and aims
in the SSE. Instead, teachers prefer AM because it allows him or her to introduce diverse
topics which students and teachers find more interesting than IAM and because AM connects
better to the world outside of school. In other words, implementing AM allows learners to
take part in and become accustomed to the natural language, as it is used by native and
foreign speakers of English. In my opinion, this is positive as it suggests that teachers are
concerned with creating a life-long interest in the English language that will benefit learners
long after they have completed upper-secondary school.

In addition, the present study has shown that with today’s wealth of material available on
the internet, finding AM is a straightforward but time-consuming affair. That is, finding and
planning AM for listening lessons is time consuming as no material, be it AM or IAM,
teaches itself. Instead, AM requires planning in regards to what to do with the material in the
classroom. Subsequently, it is the teacher’s responsibility to put the material to good use. To
address this problem I suggest that teachers share the AMs, tasks and exercises with each
other on one or several of the FACEBOOK (®) groups devoted to the teaching of English in
the Swedish educational system.

Furthermore, since AM is produced by and for native speakers of the language, it mirrors
natural language as it is used in and for real-life purposes. This indicates, even though the
majority of participating teachers in this study disagreed, that an inclusion of AM in listening
lessons can better prepare L2 learners for interaction and communication in the “real world”
outside the ESL/EFL context. Also, since research has disclosed that most of the time spent
communicating is devoted to listening, inclusion of AM in listening lessons is of special
importance, as that is the skill most used in everyday communication.

Finally, previous research as well as the present study indicates that conversations in IAMs
(i.e. textbooks) are different from conversations in the “real world”. Because of that, IAM
might do a less than adequate job at preparing learners for conversations and interactions in
the “real world” outside the language-learning classroom. Therefore, in order to better prepare
learners for real-life situations and purposes, teachers of English in Swedish upper-secondary
schools should strongly consider implementing a variety of AMs in their listening lessons.
References


Appendix A: Questionnaire
Survey on the Use of Authentic Teaching/Learning Materials for Listening Lessons

Part A) MATERIALS USED IN LISTENING LESSONS

1.) I have taught English for:
☐ 0-2 years  ☐ 3-5 years  ☐ 6-8 years  ☐ > 9 years

2.) Rank the skills 1-4 where 1 is most important for learner development and 4 is least important.
   Listening  Reading  Speaking  Writing

3.) When I studied to become a teacher, I believe I got adequate training in how to teach listening lessons.
   ☐ Strongly agree  ☐ Agree  ☐ Neutral  ☐ Disagree  ☐ Strongly disagree

Please respond to the following statements: Listening

4.) Listening lessons are equally important as lessons for the other skills. (Writing, Speaking, Reading)
   ☐ Strongly agree  ☐ Agree  ☐ Neutral  ☐ Disagree  ☐ Strongly disagree

5.) I believe that listening is something that comes naturally, therefore students don’t need to be taught how to listen.
   ☐ Strongly agree  ☐ Agree  ☐ Neutral  ☐ Disagree  ☐ Strongly disagree

Please respond to the following statements: Authentic material

6.) It is difficult to use authentic material to teach listening.
   ☐ Strongly disagree  ☐ Disagree  ☐ Neutral  ☐ Agree  ☐ Strongly Agree

Please motivate your answer: Klicka här för att ange text.

7.) In my opinion, students are more motivated by authentic materials than materials specifically designed for teaching and learning. (for example, audio from a textbook)
   ☐ Strongly disagree  ☐ Disagree  ☐ Neutral  ☐ Agree  ☐ Strongly Agree

8.) In my opinion, students find authentic materials more interesting than materials specifically designed for teaching and learning. (for example, audio from a textbook)
   ☐ Strongly disagree  ☐ Disagree  ☐ Neutral  ☐ Agree  ☐ Strongly Agree

9.) Finding appropriate authentic material for listening lessons is time consuming.
   ☐ Strongly disagree  ☐ Disagree  ☐ Neutral  ☐ Agree  ☐ Strongly Agree

Please respond to the following statements: Materials in listening lessons
10.) I prefer using materials specifically designed for teaching and learning in my listening lessons.
☐ Strongly agree  ☐ Agree  ☐ Neutral  ☐ Disagree  ☐ Strongly disagree

11.) Listening texts, which are specifically designed for teaching and learning, are different from real-life conversations.
☐ Strongly agree  ☐ Agree  ☐ Neutral  ☐ Disagree  ☐ Strongly disagree

12.) Listening tasks/exercises, which are specifically designed for teaching and learning, will not adequately prepare students for conversations and interactions outside of school.
☐ Strongly agree  ☐ Agree  ☐ Neutral  ☐ Disagree  ☐ Strongly disagree

Please respond to the following statements: Authentic materials and Lgy11
13.) By using authentic materials, I can present students with different dialects better than I can with material specifically designed for teaching and learning.
☐ Strongly disagree  ☐ Disagree  ☐ Neutral  ☐ Agree  ☐ Strongly Agree

14.) By using authentic materials, I can introduce students to different types of texts better than I can with material specifically designed for teaching and learning.
☐ Strongly disagree  ☐ Disagree  ☐ Neutral  ☐ Agree  ☐ Strongly Agree

15.) By using authentic materials, I can incorporate subjects related to students’ societal and working life better than I can with material specifically designed for teaching and learning.
☐ Strongly disagree  ☐ Disagree  ☐ Neutral  ☐ Agree  ☐ Strongly Agree

16.) By using authentic materials, students can become familiar with attitudes, values, traditions and social issues from different parts of the world better than with material specifically designed for teaching and learning.
☐ Strongly disagree  ☐ Disagree  ☐ Neutral  ☐ Agree  ☐ Strongly Agree

Your personal view of materials for listening lessons:
17.) Which type of listening material do you believe is more beneficial to students in upper-secondary school?
☐ Authentic material  ☐ Material specifically designed for teaching and learning

Please motivate your answer: Klicka här för att ange text.

PART B) (WHY) DO YOU USE MATERIALS IN LISTENING LESSONS
18.) Do you use authentic materials in your listening lessons?
☐ Yes  ☐ No
19.) Which authentic material(s) do you use? (Check all that apply)

☐ Newscasts  ☐ Interviews  ☐ Songs  ☐ Podcasts  ☐ Cartoons  ☐ Vlogs  ☐ Speeches  ☐ TED-talks

☐ Other (free text):

Klicka här för att ange text.

20.) Why do you use authentic materials?

☐ Students find them more interesting  ☐ Appropriate topic(s)  ☐ Appropriate language level

☐ To satisfy demands in the syllabus  ☐ I find them more interesting

☐ I do not have access to textbooks  ☐ They connect better to the world outside of school

21.) Which best describes your choice of materials for listening lessons?

☐ Only authentic material

☐ Only material specifically designed for teaching and learning (textbooks, workbooks etc.)

☐ A combination of both

Please explain your choice:

Klicka här för att ange text.

22.) Would you be interested in discussing this topic and your responses with me in an interview?

☐ No  ☐ Yes (If needed, I will contact you by email)

Please send the questionnaire to my email:

Roger.Edrenius@gmail.com
Appendix B: Interview questions

1: What do you see as the pros and cons of AM?

2: What do you see as the pros and cons of materials specifically designed for teaching and learning?

3: You agree that students are more motivated by AM.
   - Why is that?
   - In regards to motivation, what characteristics do AM have that you believe are missing in materials specifically designed for teaching and learning?
   - Also, how do you determine this heightened motivation? How can you see or know that the student is more motivated?

4: Your response is neutral on whether or not students find AM more interesting.
   - Why is that?
   - Could you explain this in more detail?

5: In your opinion, what is the difference between motivation and interest? Are they the same?
   - If different, which is most important for learner development, and why?

6: You specify that authentic material is more beneficial to students. In your opinion, what are the most important factors that AM brings to the learner that material specifically designed for teaching and learner does a less god job at?

7: How do you use authentic material in listening lessons?

8: How do you choose which authentic material to use? What is your main focus?

9: You agree that you can introduce different dialects better with authentic materials. In other words, authentic material does a better job. Why?

10: You agree that you can introduce different types of texts better with authentic materials In other words, authentic material does a better job. Why?

11: You agree that you can introduce subjects related to students’ societal and working life better with authentic material. In other words, authentic material does a better job. Why?

12: You agree that students can become familiar with attitudes, values, traditions and social issues in different parts of the world better with authentic material. Why?

13: In English 5 as well as 6 one of the three “Content of communication” requirements is that students should work with “current issues”
   - What type of material do you use to do that? Why? Please motivate

14: That is the last question I have on the topic at hand. Is there anything else you want to say on the topic?
Appendix C: Suggestions of *FACEBOOK* (®) groups

Suggestions of groups on *FACEBOOK* (®) consisting of teachers of English in the Swedish educational system. Number of members in the group as per 2017-12-18.

*Engelska för gymnasielärare [English for upper-secondary teachers]* (699 members)

*Gymnasielärare i svenska och/eller engelska [Upper-secondary teachers of Swedish and/or English]* (1478 members)

*Nätverk för lärare i engelska [Network for English teachers]* (2062 members)