

# EFFECTS OF FILM-BASED LISTENING INSTRUCTION ON LISTENING COMPREHENSION AND LEARNING ATTITUDES AMONG BUSINESS ENGLISH STUDENTS IN AN EFL CONTEXT

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## ABSTRACT

*This study investigated the effects of watching English-language films on Business English students' listening comprehension and learning attitudes in an English-as-a-foreign-language (EFL) context. Seventy Business English students at Can Tho Technical- Economic College participated in a one-group pretest–posttest (quasi-experimental) intervention integrating English-language films into listening instruction. Quantitative data were collected through listening pre-tests and post-tests and an attitude questionnaire, and qualitative data were gathered through classroom observations. Paired-samples t-test results showed a statistically significant improvement in listening scores from pre-test ( $M = 7.54$ ,  $SD = 2.249$ ) to post-test ( $M = 8.07$ ,  $SD = 2.341$ ),  $t = 2.111$ ,  $p = 0.037$  ( $N = 70$ ). Questionnaire results indicated generally positive attitudes toward movie-based listening activities, including reported gains in motivation, vocabulary, and idiom acquisition, and cultural awareness. However, perceived gains in communicative confidence were more modest. Overall, the findings support the use of English-language films as supplementary instructional resources to develop listening comprehension and foster positive learning attitudes in this EFL setting.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Listening comprehension is a fundamental component of foreign language learning and plays an essential role in learners' ability to communicate effectively in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts. However, in many instructional settings, especially where exposure to authentic spoken English is limited, listening remains one of the most challenging skills for learners to develop.

In Vietnam, these challenges are particularly evident among students majoring in Business English. Such learners are required to attain adequate listening competence to function effectively in professional contexts, including meetings, negotiations, presentations, and cross-cultural communication. Nevertheless, many Vietnamese Business English students continue to experience persistent difficulties in listening

comprehension, which are commonly associated with limited exposure to spoken English beyond the classroom and the continued reliance on conventional, teacher-centered listening instruction.

In response to these challenges, audiovisual materials-particularly English-language films-have increasingly been incorporated into listening instruction as an alternative pedagogical approach. By presenting spoken language in extended, contextualized, and visually supported discourse, films have the potential to facilitate listening comprehension while simultaneously fostering learner engagement and motivation. In addition to potential linguistic benefits, film-based instruction has been reported to influence learners' affective dimensions, such as interest, confidence, and attitudes toward listening activities, which are especially relevant in Business English education.

Although previous studies have examined the use of English-language films in EFL listening instruction, empirical evidence remains limited in Vietnamese vocational and technical college contexts, particularly within Business English programs. Moreover, much of the existing research has focused primarily on learning outcomes, while learners' attitudes toward film-based listening instruction have received comparatively less systematic attention.

Employing a one-group pretest–posttest design within a Vietnamese Business English program, this study provides context-specific empirical evidence on the extent to which film-based listening instruction enhances learners' listening comprehension and shapes their learning attitudes in an EFL setting.

### 1.1. Research Questions

This research addresses the following research questions:

1. To what extent does watching English-language films enhance the listening comprehension skills of Business English students at Can Tho Technical–Economic College?
2. What are Business English students' attitudes toward the use of English-language films in listening instruction?

### 1.2. Research Hypotheses

Accordingly, the study suggests the following hypotheses:

- The use of English-language films significantly improves Business English students' listening comprehension skills.
- Business English students hold positive attitudes toward learning listening through English-language films.

## 2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

### 2.1. Listening Comprehension

Listening comprehension is a fundamental component of foreign language learning, particularly in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts where learners' exposure to the target language outside the classroom is limited. Brown defines listening as an active and interpretive process in which learners construct meaning by integrating linguistic

input with contextual knowledge [1]. Similarly, Ross conceptualizes listening as a cognitive process through which learners comprehend and respond to spoken language across a range of communicative situations [2]. In EFL learning, listening comprehension functions not only as an independent skill but also as a key indicator of learners' overall language proficiency, providing a foundation for the development of productive skills such as speaking and pronunciation.

### 2.2. Objectives of Teaching Listening Comprehension

According to Ur, the primary objective of listening instruction is to enable learners to cope effectively with real-life listening situations [3]. This objective extends beyond the recognition of discrete linguistic forms to include the comprehension of meaning, the identification of speakers' communicative intentions, and the interpretation of context-dependent messages.

To achieve this objective, listening instruction should expose learners to authentic spoken language and require them to process input at multiple levels, including phonological, lexical, syntactic, and pragmatic levels. However, teaching listening in EFL contexts remains challenging due to limited exposure to spoken English, constrained instructional resources, and learner-related variables such as proficiency differences and listening anxiety.

### 2.3. Strategies for Teaching and Learning Listening Comprehension

In response to these challenges, a range of instructional strategies has been proposed to enhance listening instruction. Ur emphasizes that effective listening activities should be purpose-driven, with clearly articulated objectives that direct learners' attention during listening tasks [3]. Furthermore, listening tasks should promote active learner engagement through cognitively demanding responses such as prediction, note-taking, or summarization.

The incorporation of visual support can further facilitate comprehension by reducing cognitive load and providing contextual

scaffolding. Additionally, segmenting listening texts into manageable units enables learners to sustain attention and progressively build listening confidence. When implemented systematically, these strategies contribute to more effective listening instruction and improved learner outcomes in EFL contexts.

In addition, research on listening strategies emphasizes the strategic regulation of cognitive processes in effective listening comprehension. Successful listeners employ a range of listening strategies, including anticipating content, selectively attending to key information, monitoring comprehension in real time, and applying repair strategies when misunderstandings occur. Listening comprehension involves the dynamic interaction between bottom-up processing of acoustic and linguistic cues and top-down processing based on prior knowledge and contextual expectations. In instructional contexts, audiovisual input can enhance the development and application of listening strategies by providing rich contextual support that facilitates prediction, inference, and self-monitoring, thereby strengthening learners' strategic control over comprehension and improving overall listening performance.

#### **2.4. Role of Audiovisual Media in Teaching Listening**

Audiovisual media play a vital role in improving the effectiveness of foreign language instruction, particularly in listening comprehension. Resources such as videos, films, and other multimedia materials provide rich visual and auditory input that supports the construction of meaning and situational understanding. By combining sound with images, audiovisual media help learners interpret spoken language more effectively and sustain their attention during listening activities.

El-Araby notes that audio recordings and multimedia facilities can support the development of listening skills [4]. Recent studies suggest that using audiovisual materials enables students to hear authentic speech and everyday conversations, thereby helping bridge the gap between school and real life.

#### **2.5. Teaching Listening through English Films: Related Studies**

The use of multimedia, particularly English-language films, to develop listening skills has become increasingly popular in language teaching. Many studies have examined how TV shows and movies support listening classes and have reported positive results (Ur, [3]; Bouman, [5]; Cakir, [6]; Clark & Linden, [7]; Cullen, [8]; Hastings & Murphy, [9]; King, [10]; Yoo, [11]).

These studies commonly categorize the benefits of using English films into three main areas: motivational tools, instructional tools, and sources of authentic language input. English-language films are especially effective in increasing learner motivation, enhancing cultural awareness, and providing exposure to natural spoken English in relevant contexts. However, researchers have also noted limitations, including learners' overreliance on subtitles and technical constraints in classroom facilities. Despite these obstacles, the overall results strongly support the pedagogical potential of English films for improving EFL learners' listening comprehension.

### **3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1. Research Design**

This study adopted a mixed-methods approach, integrating quantitative and qualitative data to examine the effects of English-language films on students' listening comprehension and learning attitudes. This methodological integration enabled a more comprehensive understanding of both measurable learning outcomes and learners' perceptions and classroom behaviors.

Specifically, a one-group pretest-posttest quasi-experimental design was employed to assess changes in students' listening performance before and after the instructional intervention. Although the absence of a control group and random assignment constitute methodological limitations, this design was considered appropriate for evaluating instructional effectiveness within an authentic classroom context where experimental controls were not feasible.

#### **3.2. Participants and Scope of the Study**

The study focused on students' listening comprehension skills and learning attitudes in the Business English major. The research sample consisted of 70 students from cohorts 21, 22, and 23 at Can Tho Technical- Economic College, aged 18 to 22.

The study was conducted from April 2022 to April 2024. During this period, data were collected across multiple cohorts. Although the participants were not followed longitudinally, the extended duration allowed repeated implementation of the intervention across cohorts, thereby increasing the reliability of the observed learning outcomes.

### 3.3. Data Collection Instruments

Three primary instruments were employed for data collection:

#### 3.3.1. Listening Tests (Pre-test and Post-test)

Two parallel listening tests were designed to assess students' listening proficiency before and after the intervention. The tests were equivalent in structure, level of difficulty, and content coverage to ensure comparability. Test items included multiple-choice questions, gap-filling tasks, sequencing activities, and short-answer questions, all based on listening passages or conversational excerpts. These tests served as the primary source of quantitative data for assessing improvements in listening comprehension.

#### 3.3.2. Questionnaire Survey

A Vietnamese-language questionnaire was designed to examine students' attitudes toward learning listening skills through English films. The instrument consisted of 23 statements, measured on a five-point Likert scale, ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree.

The questionnaire's internal consistency was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha, yielding a reliability coefficient of 0.8381, indicating high internal consistency and suitability for research purposes.

#### 3.3.3. Classroom Observation

Classroom observation was used as a qualitative data collection method to capture

students' levels of participation, learning behaviors, and affective responses during instruction. Observations were conducted systematically before, during, and after the film-viewing activities to document changes in involvement and interaction throughout the intervention. The observation protocol and checklist used to guide data collection are presented in Appendix B and specify the behavioral, cognitive, and affective indicators recorded during classroom observation.

### 3.4. Research Procedure

The research procedure was implemented in three main stages:

#### Stage 1: Preparation

- Development and validation of the pre-test and post-test instruments.
- Selection of English films aligned with the thematic content of the *Business Results* coursebook. The selected films included *The Godfather*, *2012: The Last Day of the World*, *The Big Short* (2015), *The Lightning*, and *The Witness Protection Program*, among others.
- Integration of film-based activities into the regular listening curriculum to ensure pedagogical coherence.

#### Intervention description

The instructional intervention comprised *nine film-based listening sessions* implemented during regular listening classes. Each session lasted approximately 90 minutes, yielding a total instructional exposure of approximately *13.5 hours*. The English films were selected based on their linguistic appropriateness for intermediate-level learners, thematic relevance to Business English and real-life communication contexts, and authentic language use suitable for classroom listening activities.

#### Stage 2: Film Viewing and Instructional Implementation

Before viewing, students were provided with handouts outlining the objectives, tasks, and expectations for each session. Supporting materials related to film content were carefully prepared.

Each session included three viewing conditions: Vietnamese subtitles, English subtitles, and no subtitles. A detailed sample lesson plan illustrating the instructional objectives, classroom procedures, viewing stages, and task design is provided in Appendix A to ensure transparency and replicability of the instructional intervention. These conditions were implemented to support different listening activities but were not analyzed separately; instead, they were treated as an integrated instructional approach to enhancing students' overall listening comprehension.

During film viewing, the instructor closely observed students' responses to various aspects of the films, including content comprehension, auditory processing, and task engagement.

After viewing the film, students participated in group discussions on its plot, characters, and setting. Subsequently, they completed task-based customized activities for each subtitle condition, such as:

*Fill in the blanks with missing words* (Vietnamese subtitles),

*Matching words with their definitions* (English subtitles), and

*Answering comprehension questions* (no subtitles).

### **Stage 3: Post-intervention Assessment**

After completing the instructional intervention, students took the post-test. Subsequently, the questionnaire was administered to collect data on students' attitudes toward learning listening skills through English films.

**3.5. Ethical considerations:** Participation was voluntary. All students were informed about the study purpose and procedures and provided informed consent prior to data collection. Participants could withdraw at any time without penalty or impact on course grades. Data were anonymized using participant codes (S1–S70) and stored securely with access restricted to the research team. Only aggregated results were reported.

### **3.6. Data Analysis Methods**

Quantitative data from the listening tests and questionnaires were analyzed using

descriptive statistics and a paired-samples t-test to determine whether pre-test and post-test scores differed significantly.

Qualitative data collected through classroom observation were analyzed thematically and used to supplement, interpret, and triangulate the quantitative findings, consequently boosting the overall validity of the study.

## **4. RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

### **4.1. Results from the Pre-test and Post-test**

#### *4.1.1. Comparison of Pre-test and Post-test Results*

Data presented in Table 1 reveal a noticeable difference between the pre-test and post-test mean scores, with a mean difference of 0.53 (post-test minus pre-test).

**Table 1. Comparison of Pre-test and Post-test Scores**

	Mean	SD	T-value	Sig. (2-tailed)
Pre-test	7.54	2.249	2.111	0.037
Post-test	8.07	2.341		

N= 70

The results of the paired-samples t-test indicate a statistically significant t-value ( $t = 2.111$ ) with a corresponding p-value of 0.037, which is below the established significance level ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ).

#### *4.1.2. Discussion: Teaching Listening Comprehension through English Films*

Based on the results shown above, it can be concluded that practicing listening comprehension through English-language films leads to a measurable improvement in students' listening ability. Although the increase in the mean score is relatively modest, the analysis indicates an improvement in listening performance following the instructional intervention. This evidence is consistent with previous studies (King [10]; Ur [3]; Kusumarsdyati [12]), which have similarly reported that English films facilitate learners' access to authentic language input and enhance listening comprehension skills.

English-language films frequently portray real-life situations and authentic communicative contexts. They include authentic speech, colloquial expressions, and culturally-based discourse.

Taken together, the data provide strong empirical support for the research hypothesis, confirming that including English-language films in listening instruction can positively influence students' listening comprehension.

Despite higher post-test scores, the improvement is limited. This suggests that other factors - such as initial proficiency, vocabulary knowledge, exposure time, listening strategies, and individual differences- may also affect results. English films are effective, but should

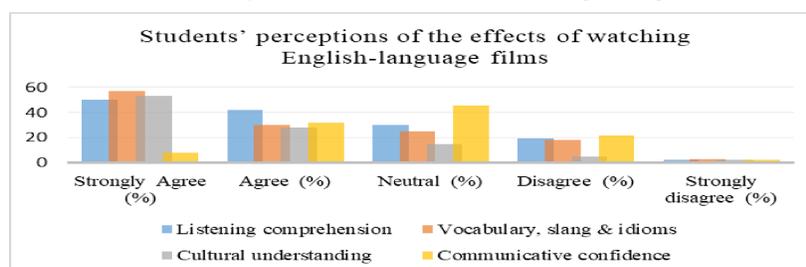
be only one component of a broader approach to listening instruction.

## 4.2. Results from the Questionnaire Survey and Discussion

### 4.2.1. Questionnaire Results

Questionnaire data indicate that integrating English-language films into listening instruction was associated with increased student interest, motivation, and enjoyment.

As illustrated in Figure 1, students demonstrated highly positive attitudes toward the perceived advantages of practicing listening comprehension using English-language films, particularly increased enjoyment, improved understanding, and greater learning motivation.



**Figure 1. Students' attitudes toward the benefits of learning listening skills through English-language films**

**Table 2. Descriptive Statistics of Students' Perceptions Based on a Five-Point Likert Scale (N = 70)**

Dimension	Mean	SD
Listening comprehension	3.89	0.86
Vocabulary, slang & idioms	3.95	0.83
Cultural understanding	3.84	0.88
Communicative confidence	3.32	0.91

Note. 1 = Strongly disagree, 5 = Strongly agree.

The chart shows that a substantial proportion of students reported that regular exposure to English-language films helps improve their listening comprehension skills (51%), vocabulary and idiom acquisition (57%), and cultural understanding (53%). Students also reported increased enjoyment and reduced anxiety during listening activities.

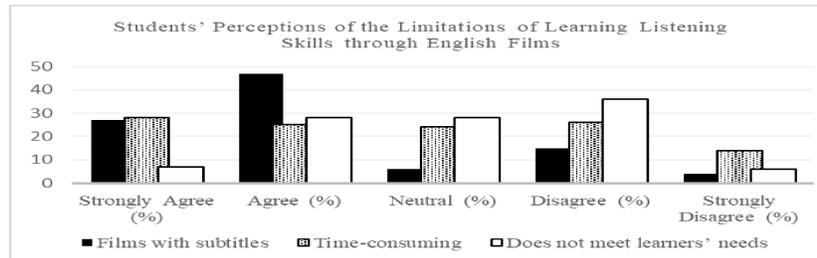
To further quantify students' perceptions, mean scores and standard deviations were calculated (see Table 2).

Vocabulary acquisition and listening comprehension achieved the highest mean scores, whereas communicative confidence recorded the lowest, indicating a comparatively weaker perceived impact in this domain.

However, despite these positive perceptions, the results reveal certain limitations. Only 32% of students believed that watching English-language films increased their confidence when communicating with foreigners, while a relatively large proportion (46%) expressed indifference. This suggests that although English-language films are effective in improving receptive skills and cultural awareness, their impact on learners' oral communicative confidence may be limited or indirect.

In addition to these perceived advantages, students acknowledged various limitations associated with practicing listening and

comprehension through English-language films, as summarized in Figure 2.



**Figure 2. Summary of students' attitudes toward the limitations of learning listening skills through English-language films**

Students reported concerns about dependence on subtitles and time constraints; however, many perceived the skills developed through film-based listening activities as transferable to other academic contexts.

To further triangulate the quantitative findings, classroom observation data were analyzed as follows. Classroom observation data were analyzed using thematic analysis. Observation notes were repeatedly reviewed and open-coded to identify recurring behaviors, which were then refined into broader themes. To enhance analytical rigor, the emerging themes were triangulated with the questionnaire findings. Three dominant themes were identified: increased learner engagement, enhanced listening and pronunciation awareness, and reduced learning anxiety. For example, observation records indicated that "students voluntarily replayed film segments to clarify meaning and discuss expressions with peers," and that "several learners imitated intonation patterns and practiced shadowing short dialogues." These qualitative findings corroborate the quantitative results, thereby strengthening the overall validity of the study.

#### 4.2.2. Discussion of Students' Attitudes toward Learning Listening through English Films

The research findings clearly demonstrate that students' positive learning attitudes play a crucial role in the effectiveness of using English films as a pedagogical tool for teaching listening comprehension. The majority of the participants,

with an average age of approximately 20, expressed a strong preference for film-based listening activities over traditional listening instruction, which primarily relies on audio recordings.

The inclusion of a student-selected film (*The Lightning*) notably contributed to increased learning motivation during listening sessions. This observation is further supported by the survey results, which show that 36% of students explicitly recommended continuing and expanding the use of this instructional method. Such findings suggest that learner autonomy and personal interest significantly enhance engagement and motivation in listening activities.

These findings align with established perspectives in second language acquisition research, which emphasize that learners' motivation is powerfully shaped by their attitudes toward instructional approaches and their perceived learning effectiveness, thereby influencing their engagement and learning effort. The survey data indicate that 50% of students supported the continued integration of English films into listening classes, whereas 51% reported that this method improved their listening comprehension. Collectively, these findings suggest that English films not only facilitate the development of listening skills but also enhance learners' confidence and overall engagement in the learning process.

From a pedagogical standpoint, the findings align with Ur's [3] perspective on the central role

of motivation and interest in teaching and learning English as a foreign language. English films create a dynamic and authentic learning environment that sustains learners' attention and encourages active participation in listening tasks. Moreover, students reported additional benefits, including vocabulary expansion, heightened awareness of pronunciation and intonation patterns, and increased cultural understanding.

However, the study also highlights certain practical limitations. The widespread use of subtitles in English films may reduce learners' focus on auditory input, as reliance on subtitles tends to support reading skills more than listening comprehension [3], [10]. This finding underscores the importance of carefully designed instructional activities that strategically regulate subtitle use to maximize listening gains.

In summary, films are widely regarded as a powerful motivational force in EFL and ESL classrooms, as they embody the notion of "*a film with a story that wants to be told rather than a lesson that needs to be taught*" [10]. In the present study, multiple dimensions of video films were explored. Nevertheless, English films consistently serve as authentic instructional materials that support both teachers and learners in developing listening comprehension among Business English majors.

## 5. CONCLUSION AND PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

### 5.1. Conclusion

This study examined the impact of using English films as an instructional tool on the listening comprehension skills and learning attitudes of Business English students at Can Tho Technical- Economic College. The research involved 70 students from three Business English cohorts (21, 22, and 23) who were enrolled in the Listening-Speaking course. Data were collected from two primary sources: results of listening pre-tests and post-tests, and students' responses to an attitude questionnaire.

The analysis revealed that the mean pre-test score was 7.54, while the mean post-test score

increased to 8.07, indicating a noticeable improvement in students' listening comprehension following the instructional intervention. Statistical analysis confirmed that this improvement was statistically significant ( $p < 0.05$ ). In addition, questionnaire responses and classroom observations consistently demonstrated students' positive attitudes toward learning listening skills through English films.

Overall, the findings suggest that integrating English films into listening instruction not only enhances listening comprehension but also creates a more interactive, engaging, and authentic learning environment, enabling learners to encounter English in communicative contexts that closely resemble real-life situations. Although the magnitude of score improvement was relatively modest, the study confirms the considerable pedagogical potential of this approach in promoting exposure to authentic language and sustaining learner motivation in Business English education.

### 5.2. Pedagogical Implications and Limitations

Drawing on questionnaire and classroom observation data, this study identifies several pedagogical implications for the use of English-language films in developing listening comprehension among Business English learners in EFL contexts. English-language films serve as an effective supplementary resource, enhancing learner engagement, vocabulary development, and cultural awareness, and should thus be integrated alongside conventional audio materials. The findings further highlight the need for pedagogically regulated subtitle use; a staged progression from L1 subtitles to English subtitles and ultimately to unsubtitled viewing may support comprehension while fostering listening proficiency. Additionally, students' preferences underscore the importance of learner autonomy and increased exposure to film-based listening, suggesting that providing opportunities for material choice and self-directed practice can strengthen motivation and engagement. Finally, learners perceived film-based listening skills as

transferable to academic and professional domains, supporting the broader integration of this approach within Business English curricula, particularly in courses emphasizing communication and intercultural competence.

This study has several limitations. The one-group design limits causal inference, and the observed effect size was modest. Using a single listening test may not adequately capture listening competence, and potential observer bias and uncontrolled confounding variables (e.g., external exposure and learner motivation) may have influenced the results. Future research should adopt controlled designs, multiple assessment tools, independent observers, and stronger control of confounding factors to improve validity and generalizability.

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## ẢNH HƯỞNG CỦA PHIM TIẾNG ANH ĐẾN KỸ NĂNG NGHE VÀ THÁI ĐỘ HỌC TẬP CỦA SINH VIÊN NGÀNH TIẾNG ANH THƯƠNG MẠI

### TÓM TẮT

Nghiên cứu này xem xét tác động của việc sử dụng phim tiếng Anh đối với năng lực nghe hiểu và thái độ học tập của sinh viên ngành Tiếng Anh Thương mại trong bối cảnh dạy học tiếng Anh như một ngoại ngữ (EFL). 70 sinh viên Trường Cao đẳng Kinh tế - Kỹ thuật Cần Thơ tham gia nghiên cứu theo thiết kế bán thực nghiệm nhóm có đo trước – đo sau, trong đó phim tiếng Anh được tích hợp vào giảng dạy kỹ năng nghe. Dữ liệu được thu thập thông qua bài kiểm tra nghe trước và sau thực nghiệm, phiếu hỏi khảo sát thái độ học tập, và quan sát lớp học. Kết quả kiểm định t cho mẫu phụ thuộc cho thấy điểm nghe sau thực nghiệm tăng có ý nghĩa thống kê so với trước thực nghiệm ( $M_{trước} = 7,54$ ;  $SD = 2,249$ ;  $M_{sau} = 8,07$ ;  $SD = 2,341$ ;  $t = 2,111$ ;  $p = 0,037$ ). Kết quả khảo sát cho thấy sinh viên có thái độ nhìn chung tích cực đối với việc học nghe thông qua phim, đặc biệt về động cơ học tập, phát triển từ vựng, tiếp thu thành ngữ và nhận thức văn hóa, trong khi mức cải thiện được cảm nhận về sự tự tin giao tiếp còn hạn chế. Nhìn chung, nghiên cứu cung cấp bằng chứng thực nghiệm ủng hộ việc sử dụng phim tiếng Anh như một học liệu hỗ trợ hiệu quả nhằm nâng cao kỹ năng nghe và thúc đẩy thái độ học tập tích cực của sinh viên trong bối cảnh EFL.

**Từ khóa:** Kỹ năng nghe hiểu, phim tiếng Anh, sinh viên Tiếng Anh Thương mại, tiếng Anh như một ngoại ngữ, thái độ học tập