

Listening as an Interactive Process: Improving Listening Proficiency

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Abstract: One of the fundamental components of spoken language processing is listening, and listening is a topic that is related to many other areas of research and development. Spoken language cannot exist without hearing. This article discusses listening literacy in EFL/ESL classes, with a focus on developing listening skills through reciprocal processes.

Key points: classroom distractions, recording voices, pronunciation, active and passive listening, focus, listening activities, and listening comprehension.

Introduction

First of all, receiving sounds, understanding the information conveyed by the sounds you hear, appreciating the information, and responding to it are all parts of listening. Here's a brief fact: bad listening causes over 60% of misconceptions, although poor reading only accounts for 1% of them.

It may be time to add exercises if you do not currently specifically teach listening to your students. The benefits of effective listening techniques extend beyond the classroom and benefit your students in both their personal and academic lives. One of the four primary language skills is listening. As the importance of listening as a skill grew in the 1970s, language teaching programs started to include it in addition to speaking, reading, and writing. As Communicative Language Teaching gained traction in the late 1970s and English language instruction for communication began to play a significant role globally, the importance of teaching listening rose. Since listening became more of a focus in the 1990s, auditory comprehension has become increasingly important in the study of second and foreign languages¹. However, as a teacher, you should be aware of the distinction between hearing and listening, which is described. Understanding this distinction is essential for effective listening instruction and learning. One definition states that listening is the process of giving meaning to sounds, whereas hearing is the act of receiving sounds. While listening is active, hearing is passive². Active listening can be broadly defined as hearing and paying attention to someone with the intention of understanding rather than reacting. A student waiting their turn and listening to what their classmates have to say before voicing their opinion is an example of active listening in the classroom. In language classrooms, listening is crucial because it

¹ O.Yildirim, S.Yildirim. (2016) The importance of listening in language learning and listening comprehension problems experienced by language learners: A literature review. Abant İzzet Baysal Üniversitesi Eğitim Fakültesi Dergisi, 16 (4). pp 150-153

² John A. Kline. (2004) Speaking effectively : achieving excellence in presentations. Print Book, Pearson/Prentice Hall, Upper Saddle River, N.J. pp 63-65.

allows students to participate. If the material is not well comprehended, then learning cannot begin. Instructors can assist students concentrate on new language elements including vocabulary, grammar, and interactional patterns by using listening exercises³. The importance of listening skills to overall language ability is evident in the fact that they account for over 45% of conversation time.

Interactive activities

Instructors always hope that students are closely following their teachings and assignment instructions. Regretfully, teachers frequently observe that pupils are not paying close attention to what they are saying, which might impair learning. Unfortunately, a lot of children would rather wait to talk than engage in active listening. While educators can model effective listening for their students, nothing compares to giving them the opportunity to practice in groups of peers, initially in pairs. This becomes a problem when they fail to pay attention to crucial information during instruction. It is a good idea to dedicate some time to teaching listening skills to students in order to increase their retention of the subject being taught. How carefully an ESL teacher designs his programs to suit different learning styles will determine how successful his ESL pupils are. If he does his part and gives them exercises that work for their learning styles, they will engage in the material and do well in class. When practicing active listening in groups or with partners, students can take part in a range of activities. Asking the speaker to clarify something they just said or posing a question that will clarify the speaker's intentions are two options available to a confused listener. For a student who might feel uncomfortable sharing something with a classmate in a seated or standing pair share during face-to-face discussions, nonverbal cues are incredibly beneficial.

1. Nonverbal signals

Body language is one of the things that is lacking from the rush of texts that kids exchange these days. Face-to-face communication offers the chance to resolve issues right away or to allow a small amount of body language to aid in clearly comprehending the speaker's message. In *Next Steps with Academic Conversations* (2019), Jeff Zwiers makes the point that students should use—and practice using—nonverbal cues with partners in the classroom, such as head nods, eye contact, and gestures.

2. Paraphrasing for comprehension

Students who discuss something with a partner in class outside of their comfort zones do so because they want to be understood. In that case, it is the responsibility of the listener to make an effort to understand and to convey to the speaker their understanding. How are listening comprehension lessons presented to students in classroom? The most effective listening skills instruction techniques nowadays encompass anything from interactive exercises to multimedia materials. Simple, enjoyable activities that place more of an emphasis on the learning process than the final outcome are the greatest ways to acquire or develop listening skills. It is not new to teach listening skills through games. There are some approaches to enhance listening.

Follow-up activities Activities to wake up ss

More listening Jazz chants

Writing activities Jokes

Role playing Puzzles, Poems

Top-down and bottom-up strategies

Furthermore, one of the best method to achieve listening proficiency is bottom-up and top-down strategies. Top-down processing is cognitive understanding of the world, which allows the reader or listener to create expectations prior to listening or reading.⁴ According to Stanovich,⁵ listeners frequently use top-down processing to make up for exterior flaws, such as a noisy background. This indicates that we attempt to rely on our schema of the topic if the language information is distorted.

³ Michael Rost. (1994) *Teaching and Researching Listening* Edinburgh Gate Harlow CM20 2JE United Kingdom Introduction ISBN: 978-1-4082-0507-5 Penguin. London. pp 102-117

Top-down approaches concentrate on the "big picture" and overarching message of a listening text. The discussion of the subject is frequently followed by the use of a "gist" or "extensive" assignment to listen for the overall meaning. Top-down strategies rely on students having some prior knowledge of the subject and either understanding how specific social exchanges function (i.e., the functional and situational language common to certain exchanges) or understanding what language "chunks" (expressions, etc.) "fit" the specific topic or situation. Contrarily, bottom-up tactics employ exercises that concentrate on comprehension at a sound or word level and emphasize listening for specifics. Tasks are "intense" because they concentrate on finding specific details.

Psycholinguistic research and trials support the bottom-up method of teaching listening comprehension because it helps students build listening strategies. With this strategy, the instructor has complete control over how the class accesses the content and can guide students' attention to the precise information they "need to know." Here are some ideas such as listening bingo, dictogloss, gap fill. The teachers must be aware of the issues that the students are facing in order to improve their listening skills. Because listening is still a major problem for English learners in Uzbekistan, the top down and bottom-up processes must be understood. While bottom-up processing refers to the process of understanding information through sound analysis, word meaning, and grammar, top-down processing refers to the usage of new methods or students' expertise in interpreting the information supplied. Maintaining personal connections, completing tasks at work, paying attention in class, choosing the best bus to take to the airport, and many other areas of our lives depend on our ability to listen. Receiving, interpreting, evaluating, remembering, and responding are the five stages of the listening process. In the sections that follow, these stages will be covered in more detail. In essence, a good listener must be able to hear and recognize speech sounds that are being directed at them, comprehend the message of those sounds, and analyze or evaluate it critically. Maintaining personal connections, completing tasks at work, paying attention in class, choosing the best bus to take to the airport, and many other areas of our lives depend on our ability to listen. Receiving, interpreting, evaluating, remembering, and responding are the five stages of the listening process. In the sections that follow, these stages will be covered in more detail. In essence, a good listener must be able to hear and recognize speech sounds that are being directed at them, comprehend the message of those sounds, and analyze or evaluate it critically. Teaching knowledge and facts is simpler than teaching a talent. However, teachers can raise students' confidence and listening abilities via. teaching them techniques for improving their listening skills supplying them with ESL exercises that put the techniques we have learned into practice.

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