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INTEGRATIVE TEACHING OF LISTENING SKILLS: SELECTION AND ADAPTATION MATERIALS

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Abstract Listening skills are vital for learners. Of the 'four skills,' listening is by far the most frequently used. Listening and speaking are often taught together, but beginners, especially non-literate ones, should be given more listening than speaking practice. It's important to speak as close to natural speed as possible, although with beginners some slowing is usually necessary. Without reducing one's speaking speed, one can make your language easier to comprehend by simplifying your vocabulary, using shorter sentences, and increasing the number and length of pauses in one's speech. Listening skill makes you successful in workplace, family and in the society. Good listening skill is mandatory to get into a profession in communications, management, planning, sales, etc. Listening skills involve a different set of etiquettes, questioning for explanation, showing empathy and providing a suitable response. Good listening skills include the understanding ability. Body language is also a part of listening skill. Eye contact with the speaker, sitting straight and alert are the good gestures of a good listener.

Keywords: listening skills, teaching methodology, English language, speech skills, speech activity.

Listening comprehension has received considerable attention in the fields of applied linguistics, psycholinguistics and second language pedagogy during the last two decades (Anderson & Lynch¹, Flowerdew,² Rost,³ Underwood,⁴ Ur⁵). Results of the large body of research have shown that listening is not a passive process, in which the listener simply receives a spoken message, but rather a complex cognitive process, in which the listener constructs the meaning using both her linguistic and non-linguistic knowledge. The importance of the listeners' cognitive and social judgements in the process of listening, in addition to the linguistic knowledge, has been especially emphasised.

Although most of the findings relevant to understanding how listening operates come from research into listening in the mother tongue, many of the conclusions have had important implications for the teaching of listening in the foreign language. It is widely recognised today that listening is an active skill, or rather, a cluster of various sub-skills, which are both learnable and teachable. Listening is regarded as an essential element of foreign language proficiency, and as such plays an important role

¹ Anderson, A., & Lynch, T. (1988). *Listening*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

² Flowerdew, J. (Ed.). (1994). *Academic listening: Research perspectives*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

³ Rost, M. (1994). *Introducing listening*. Harmondsworth: Penguin

⁴ Underwood, M. (1989). *Teaching listening*. London: Longman.

⁵ Ur, P. (1984). *Teaching listening comprehension*. London: Longman.

in foreign language programs. Various methodologies for the teaching of listening have emerged. These have had a considerable influence on course design and textbook writing, especially in terms of features of materials for teaching listening (authentic vs. constructed), types of listening tasks, ways of raising learner awareness of the listening process and effective strategies for listening, stages in listening activities, and integrating listening with other language skills. The importance that listening receives in foreign language pedagogy today is reflected at various levels: in one form or another, listening is present in syllabuses, course books and teaching materials available on the market, general proficiency language exams and is even the main focus of specialized courses, such as academic listening.

Research into the specific features of academic listening has shown the complexity of this skill. Richards,⁶ for example, specifies a list of micro-skills within academic listening as opposed to conversational listening, such as understanding the main points in a lecture, or distinguishing between the main line and digressions. A different classification is offered by Rost, who starts from the assumption that listening sub-skills are grouped into certain clusters, arranged into hierarchies. Both classifications, however, indicate that academic listening is a skill whose development requires special training. These and other findings have contributed to the fact that many universities today recognize the need to offer courses in academic listening at the beginning of university studies, either as special courses or as part of study skills courses, with the aim to train students to develop skills for listening in the academic context.⁷

Listening skills are an essential part of any language. There are several things one can do for English listening practice. One of the most common ways to do this is to watch movies. Whether they are dubbed in your native language or not, it is useful to hear the natural speed in which native English speakers speak. In addition, there are many sites you can find around the Internet to help. Segments for free listening English can easily be found on YouTube or any other video site, such as video.about.com. Look for segments in which the speaker speaks clearly at a natural speed. For beginner ESL listening, the speed will seem difficult, but in time it becomes very easy. To increase the challenge and difficulty of your listening, start listening to a wide variety of songs in English.

Without the video in the background, the speed changes, or even the music in the background, this makes for very challenging English listening.

If these are not available there are more innovative ways to get ESL listening skills in. Download short stories off the Internet and read them out loud to yourself or a partner. A tricky thing that comes up often in English listening practice is a homonym. These are words that are pronounced or spelt the same, but have different meanings. A good English listening exercise will have several of these, which you should be able to figure out from the context of the narrative. For ESL listening, these should be practiced often until the meanings of context are understood.

⁶ Richards, J. C. The context of language teaching. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 1985

⁷ Flowerdew, J. Academic listening: Research perspectives. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 1994

It's necessary to teach speech activities while teaching listening. We can receive an information, and also we can give another in its place. This process comprises the aim of teaching English. There are two types of speech activities:

1. Receptive (listening and reading)
2. Productive (speaking and writing)

According to the research, while reading and seeing student can receive more than 6% information than listening,.

Nevertheless there is integration among all speech activities. Especially, there is close integration between listening and speaking. That's why they are both receptive speech doings.in the process of correct reading pupil may understand easily. If he cannot read or cannot pronounce the word correctly, he will not recognize the word while listening and he will not be able to catch the meaning of the given word. There are some complications of listening while learning English. They are two:

- A. Extra linguistic
- B. Linguistic

Extra linguistic difficulties are:

1. The listening material is mechanic; listening phonogram or video phonogram
2. Listening real speech from the speaker
3. Tempo of speech
4. Speed of speech
5. Listening state (it's belong to number of pupils, their behavior, their keeping calm while listening)
6. Need for listening
7. Attention of pupil
8. Listening one or several times
9. There should be given glossary or some pictures

Linguistic difficulties:

1. Being the speech monologue or dialogue
2. Phonologic difficulty (pronouncing the words in correct order)
3. Lexicological difficulty (known words, being polysemantic and conversion)
4. Grammatical difficulty (tenses, grammatical forms, structure of sentences)

Grammatical difficulty divides in to two parts:

1. Being difficult to understand
2. Not being difficult to understand

Adjective and verb suffices are not too difficult, but, tenses, question sentences and their syntactic structure becomes more difficult one.

Stylistic difficulty may be seen while listening the word in dialect or in literary form.

According to V.Rogova there are such kind of difficulties while listening:

1. Phonetic difficulties can be seen while listening contrastive words;
[θ-s]; [tr-t]; [ʌ-o]; [s-z]; [ð-θ]; [dʒ-ʒ]; [t-tʃ]; [w-v]; [u-u:];
[ʒ-v]; [æ-e]

Pupil meets some problems to differentiate these words while listening: worked-walked, first-fast, fast-forced, lion-line, tired-tide, and bought-boat-board.

They listen incorrect because they hear not right. These difficulties belong to phonetics. While listening these sentences incorrect they will not understand the correct form of the sentence, for example: the horse is sleeping, the horse is slipping. G.V. Rogova divides the types of exercises into two parts:

1. Drill exercises (phonetic exercises: listen to the words- desk, pen, ten)
2. Speech exercises (listen to the following words and find the word a boy :

A baby, a box, a toy, a boat, a toy, a boy, a girl.

Among the four skills in English language learning, listening plays the most important role in communication in real life:⁸ listening accounts for 40-50% of communicating, with dialogue at 25-30%, reading at 11-16%, and writing at 9% Nevertheless, listening has been put in the dark box in the English classroom. In other words, listening teaching is thought about and taught poorly in many EFL programs, even though it is used at such high frequency outside the classroom. Before putting English teachers in front of the wall/war in listening teaching, teachers need to go back to review the subject knowledge about the process of listening comprehension.

I. Approaches in Listening Teaching

Listening comprehension is regarded as an active process. Each listener needs to select their individual aspects of aural input, then form their understanding of the passage and associate what they hear with their prior/background knowledge. Through this process, listeners are able to produce answers and reactions for communication.

I.1 Bottom-up Approach

The bottom-up approach acknowledges listening is a process of decoding sounds, from the smallest significant units to complex texts, inclusive of the main four processing levels as follows: a) phonemes, b) individual words, c) syntactic level followed by an analysis of the semantic content, and at last, d) literal understanding.

I.2 Top-down Method

The top-down approach employs background knowledge in comprehending the meaning of the message. Listeners employ their background knowledge of the context and situation to understand what they hear. They make use of the knowledge of the topic at hand, speakers, and their personal correlation with the situation to enhance their understanding. It stresses the way various kinds of knowledge are used to help understand the message coming from the ears, but it is not prepared into any fixed order because all the forms of prior knowledge interact and influence each other.

I.3 Interactive Tactic

Interactive theory shows another way to overcome the shortcomings of bottom-up and top-down approaches to listening comprehension. It emphasizes the importance of acoustic input, suggesting that listening comprehension is a process of interaction among the acoustic inputs, different types of linguistic knowledge, details of the context and general world knowledge and so forth (Gilakjani and Ahmadi, 2011).

⁸ Mendelsohn, D.J., & Rubin, J. (1995). A guide for the teaching of second language listening. San Diego, CA: Dominic Press.

English teachers in their seminar room instruction can now combine both bottom-up and top-down approaches to help students work on their ability in listening comprehension (LC), making complex and simultaneous processing and interpretation much easier.

After looking at certain concepts of LC, we would like to figure out how to have a listening curriculum embedded in daily instruction in regular class or specific class. Intensive listening and extensive listening are the two approaches that teachers might use with their students at different stages.

1.4 Intensive Listening and Extensive listening

In intensive listening instruction, students are required to listen to a text several times, or teachers can divide the text into paragraphs and sentences to focus on each one. Else, in extensive listening instruction, students won't be asked to understand every sentence and every word. On the contrary, students are encouraged to grasp the general picture of the message. The main goal of extensive listening instruction is to help format the habits to understand the content as the priority. So to speak, intensive listening is for building basic learning skills while extensive listening is to functionalize overall listening ability.

1.5 Controlled Process and Programmed Process

Most people might have the bias that spoken text and written text share almost the same features in their linguistic system. As a matter of fact, there are some alterations between them. One of the significant points of spoken text is that people do not usually speak in sentences, instead using a lot of short phrase or clauses put together in a rather loose way, especially in informal situations. In addition, the vocabulary and the syntax tend to be far more colloquial and much less formal. That resources many words and terminologies that are used in speech, seldom or never occur in written text. Moreover, speech takes place in real time, so the text is heard only once, and then it is gone. It is almost impossible for a listener to rehear a piece of speech while readers are able to go back to the text to clarify their understanding. "Speakers generally speak very quickly: three words a second is quite normal so that to understand speakers at this speed, the listening developments must be almost entirely automatic (Buck, 2010, p.6)".

In L1, learners rarely have problems processing information when speech rates get faster, while second language learners will not have sufficient time to process the evidence even in terms of lexical and grammatical function because, for second language learners, their language processing will be only partly automatic. Just like driving a car, at the first stage, the whole process is controlled and the drivers pay their attention to everything they need to do, but after a while things become a little more automatic and then, drivers are able to drive a car without thinking to think about it very much. Eventually, they are able to automatically control everything.

With a clear mind about the reputation of information processing in listening comprehension, we English teachers are trying to find out ways to help learners in their listening performance.

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