

IMPROVING LISTENING SKILL BY USING PRACTICAL TECHNIQUES IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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Abstract: this article analysis listening techniques to improve students' listening comprehension and shows the lack of listening teaching and meagre listening habits were the cause of diminishing listening skills. Moreover, it helps the English language teachers and students to overcome this problem by showing the results of application of practical technique for improving English language listening skill.

Key words: *strategies, listening comprehension, English language, practical techniques, students, teachers*

It is a well-known fact that listening is vital in the acquisition of the English language because it provides language input. The best methods are therefore those that supply 'comprehensible input' in low anxiety situations, containing messages that students really want to hear. These methods do not force early production in the second language, but allow students to produce when they are ready, recognizing that improvement comes from supplying communicative and comprehensible input, and not from forcing and correcting production. Whereas, English language learners acquire the second language when they absorb sufficient comprehensible input. As we see listening is crucial in the acquisition of English. Nowadays, there is an urgent need to improve students' listening comprehension since it impedes that English students acquire and be communicatively competent in English. However, there has been little research about this skill. In spite of English second language learners, have serious problems in English listening comprehension because universities pay more attention to English grammar, reading and vocabulary.

Listening is the fundamental language skill, It is the medium through which individuals obtain a large portion of their education, information, understanding of the world, human affairs, ideals, sense of values, and appreciation. In our world of mass communication, much of it is developed orally. Therefore, it is important that students be taught to listen effectively and critically. Listening is considered the most important of the fourth skills such as speaking, Reading, and writing not only in the acquisition of a second language also in the acquisition of the first language, because it gives the aural input which is necessary to acquire a language and permits people to interact in spoken communication. There is a significant positive relationship between listening comprehension ability and foreign language acquisition, indicating that listening ability is an extremely factor in the acquisition of foreign language. Numerous studies indicated that efficient listening skills were more important than reading skills as a factor contributing to academic success. It is evident that listening plays the main role in second language acquisition, Therefore, English teachers must take action and promote listening comprehension teaching in their classrooms to help students get improved with their listening skills.

Listening is the mental process of constructing meaning from spoken input. Furthermore, listening is conceived as an active process in which listeners select and interpret information, which comes from auditory and visual clues in order to define what is going on and what speakers are trying to express. This process implicates perception, attention, cognition, and memory. During this process, many factors can impede that second language learners grasp listening input. Among the most important factors, we have speech rate, phonological features and background knowledge. Other aspects that hinder listening input comprehension are insufficient exposure to the target language, and a lack of interest and motivation. Listener difficulties are also related to the levels of cognitive demands made by the content of the texts. Numerous difficulties, which can be confronted in listening tasks such as unknown vocabularies, unfamiliar topics, fast speech rate, and unfamiliar accents.

Listening strategies facilitate comprehension and help listeners compensate the difficulties they had in understanding listening input. There are three types of listening strategies: metacognitive, cognitive, and socio-affective strategies. All of them utilize different techniques to grasp meaning and some of them interrupt the listening process to do it more efficient. Metacognitive strategies describe complex activities that listeners do to catch meaning. They regulate and direct the language learning process when listeners use metacognitive techniques they begin to analyze the requisites of the listening task, try to make good predictions, activate the correct listening process required, check their comprehension, and evaluate the success of their approach. Cognitive strategies refer to basic techniques that listeners do to understand listening input; for example making inferences, realizing what went wrong, or what produced misinterpretation during the listening task. Finally, socio-affective strategies refers to techniques that listeners utilize to confirm understanding, cooperate with the speaker, or to lower anxiety; for example, listeners interact with the speaker, ask for clarification, negotiate meaning. Four strategies, which would help learners to listen to English by activating or building schema, guessing, or predicting, listening selectively, and negotiating meaning.

Note taking is the process of taking notes. The writer used this technique because it gave the learners the opportunity to have a written record of the lecture. Taking notes made the learners active and involved listeners. When learners took notes they had to concentrate and paid attention to what was being said and how the writer was saying it. The learners paid attention to different aspects, for example, body language, listening for introductory, concluding and transition words and phrases, and using pictures and diagrams to make the notes more understandable. The writer explained to the experimental group students that they had to organize their space on the page; develop their own system of shorthand abbreviations; use diagrams, pictures, colours to make the notes more visual. Similarly, the author emphasized that when they get lost they had to leave space to fill it later, and left a symbol indicating that it had to be completed. It was learners'

obligation to write legibly. It was obligatory to use "The Cornell Format" It says that on page of his notes the learner must draw a vertical line, top to down. 5cm from the left side of the paper. The learners will write their notes on the right of this line and on the left of the line, they will write key words, word clues, and sample questions.

In addition, if the writer spoke too fast, the learners had to ask her to slow down. In the case of the audio program, if it was too fast, the learners had to ask that the track be repeated. Equally, the learner had to ask questions and clarifications about the topic. All these aspects contributed to make note-taking more effective. The author presented well-known abbreviations like these. However, learners could create their own abbreviations to copy rapidly.

Once learners had learnt to take notes. They had to continue with the note-making process in order to complete and consolidate this process. This process began with the reading of the taken notes. After, the learners had to underline headings and subheadings, correct spelling mistakes and rewrite illegible chunks. In addition, the learners had to complete any gaps, underlined or highlighted important sentences or paragraphs. The learners made sure that they understood concepts, definitions, opinions, etc. In some cases, the learners completed the Cornell system. As soon as the learners had reviewed the lecture notes. They were ready to use this information to talk about it, to give their opinions about the topic, or to write a composition about the topic. Overall, they showed that they have understood the listening input.

The writer applied this listening skill since it is a variation of dictation. In fact, it is a sort of supported dictation, which integrates the four skills. Hence, its effectiveness, it requires learners to listen, talk, collaborate, take-notes, redraft, and present orally. Observe that, it can be used at all levels. The writer read short texts several times. The texts had a language level slightly above that of the learners but the subjects were familiar for them. The writer introduced new vocabulary or new structures, but not complicated ones, since the learners could feel anxiety and frustration. The learners tried to produce their own version as close to the original

as possible. The collaborative nature of the activity means that a beginner can be paired with a more fluent learner and get a model to follow. The most important advantage of applying doctorless was that they encouraged learners to use more advanced vocabulary and sentence structures. The writer worked in this way: First, she read a short text on a familiar topic at normal speed. Second, the learners listened and took notes. Third, the writer repeated the reading, after writing new subject vocabulary on the board to help learners. Fourth, the learners worked in pairs and shared their notes. Fifth, the author read the text again at normal speed. The learners worked in groups of four to produce a final written version of the text. The objective was to write a similar version as the original one.

All these techniques were applied by the writer in order to give the experimental group tons of listening input. Similarly, the writer followed the three phases to teach listening: pre, while and post-listening. The writer considers that these phases and the activities developed in these stages are important in the listening process.

After the application of the listening techniques and statistical procedures in this experimental project, the author has arrived at several important conclusions; among the most significant are the improvement in listening comprehension of the experimental group students, homogeneity in this group, and rejection of the null hypothesis. The listening techniques provided useful listening resources such as note taking, dictation, matching, multiple matching and sentence completion exercises. These techniques helped a lot in the class when the students got tired, bored, or were stressed, because they created a relaxed and nice environment which stimulated listening acquisition.

References

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