

ROLE OF LISTENING SKILL IN TEACHING ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

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Abstract

The relevance of the topic is due to the fact that listening plays a crucial role in supporting communication in everyday life as well as in academic life. Until recently, the importance of listening skills has gone unnoticed and they have not played an important role in foreign language teaching programmes. However, in recent years, in the process of language teaching particular importance has begun to be attached to its communicative function or structure, and in these circumstances, listening comprehension has demonstrated its importance and has found its rightful place in English language teaching programmes. Although there are various approaches to teaching listening comprehension, the success of each approach depends to some extent on solving and minimizing the listening comprehension problems encountered by language learners. The aim of this article is to examine the main concepts related to the place and importance of listening skills in learning English as a second or foreign language.

KEYWORDS: Listening, Learning, Language skills, Teaching skills and Language Acquisition

THE IMPORTANCE OF LISTENING

As one of the four pillars of language acquisition, listening has a more significant role in language acquisition. Despite the fact that other skills, like reading and writing are essential in development of language skills, listening contributes the main input in language improvement. As a primarily developed receptive skill, listening awakes recognition of the world. Language abilities of people can be improved by being thought listening. Sound, rhyme, pronunciation, intonation and stress can be absolutely adopted only through

listening. To comprehend the nuances in English language, ones need to be able to listen. When we begin to understand spoken language through our ears, it is easier to develop other skills and gain confidence. As a primary form of communication listening assists learners of language to see the secrets and beauties of particular language. In particular, when we talk about communicative language teaching, there should be noticed that listening provides the aural input and gives to learners ability to communicate in a spoken language, accordingly listening is vital in language learning.

In people's daily life, listening plays crucial role as a main tool of communication Guo and Wills state "it is the medium through which people gain a large proportion of their education, their information, their understanding of the world and human affairs, their ideals, sense of values"¹. In our mother language, listening is the first language skill that we develop, so through listening we understand the world and acquire the major portion of information. Why should not we use the same technic in our English language classroom? I mean, what if we start teaching language by primarily developing listening skills? To answer this questions I can state words of Peterson: "no other type of language input is easy to process as spoken language, received through listening ... through listening, learners can build an awareness of the interworkings of language systems at various levels and thus establish a base for more fluent productive skills"². As we can see, listening influences all other language skills. When we listen a language, we can get a lot of information about not only phonemes, pronunciation but also its structure, interaction of words, lexical resources and others. In particular, in mastering a language for communicative purpose, listening performs a essential role, because it facilitates the language learner to gather pronunciation, phrase stress, vocabulary, and syntax and the

¹ Guo, N. & Wills, R. (2006). An investigation of factors influencing English listening comprehension and possible measures for improvement. AER Journal. Retrieved from <http://www.aare.edu.au/05pap/guo05088.pdf>

² Peterson, P. W. (2001). Skills and strategies for proficient listening. In M. Celce Murcia (Ed.), Teaching English as a Second or Foreign Language, (p.69-85). Boston: Heinle & Heinle.

comprehension of messages conveyed may be primarily based totally on tone of voice, pitch and accent; and it's miles best feasible whilst we listen. Without information enter appropriately, mastering absolutely can't get any improvement. In addition, with out listening skill, no communique may be achieved ³.

Moreover, all the researches carried out in the field of language acquisition have proved that, when communicating, we acquire 45% of language competence in listening, 30% in speaking, 15% in reading and 10% in writing. Due to the fact that statistics are largely involved in the process of communication, listening must be considered as a precursor of language. Listening, unlike other language skills, is relatively difficult for learners to grasp because it has all the interrelated sub-skills, including reception, comprehension, memorisation, evaluation and response. But with the advent of communicative foreign language teaching and the emphasis on language proficiency, the familiarity and learning of listening has become increasingly interesting. Nevertheless, listening is not only not included in the curriculum, but also wishes to generate more interest in the process of language acquisition.

The majority of people believe that having writing and speaking skills of second language means knowing the language; however, as Anderson and Lynch says “we only become aware of what remarkable feats of listening we achieve when we are in an unfamiliar listening environment, such as listening to a language in which we have limited proficiency” ⁴. Without having the efficient listening abilities, effective communication is impossible. That is, listening is considered as a fundamental skill in learning second language and over 50% of the time that learners spend communicating in a foreign language will be dedicated to listening.

³ Croom Helm Cross, D., 1998, Teach English, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

⁴ Anderson, A. & Lynch, T. (2003). Listening. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

In the language classroom, listening is crucial as it gives input for learners. Every learning can begin only within clear understanding input. Spoken language affords a method of interplay for the learner. Because beginners should engage to reap understanding. Access to language speakers is essential. Moreover, beginners' failure to apprehend the language they pay attention is an impetus, now no longer an obstacle, to interplay and learning. Listening activities provide educators with a tools for directing learners' attention to new forms in the language ⁵.

To sum up, as sustaining effective communication is crucial for people, listening has an essential role in daily life and academic context as well. Emphasizing the importance of listening, Anderson and Lynch state that listening skills are as important as speaking skills because people cannot communicate face-to-face unless both types of skills are developed together. ⁶Listening skills are also important for learning purposes since through listening students receive information and gain insights

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⁵ Rost, M. (1994). Introducing listening. London: Penguin books.

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