

THE EFFECTIVE WAYS TO TEACH LISTENING SKILLS TO BEGINNER LEVEL STUDENTS

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Abstract:

This study aimed at identifying various ways and techniques during teaching listening to the beginners. Nowadays, most of the learners are facing with difficulties about understanding listening audio and podcasts. There are many methods identified by experts. The importance of contextualized activities, pre-listening activities, comprehension strategies, authentic listening materials, and visual support will be discussed. These strategies, supported by recent research findings, offer valuable insights for language educators seeking innovative and effective teaching techniques proficiency among beginner level students.

Keywords: listening ability, podcasts, group activity, methods, improvement, language mastering, pronunciation, beginner level students, contextualized activities, pre-listening activities, comprehension strategies, authentic listening materials, visual support.

Introduction

Nowadays English language is becoming more and more important around the world. But learning English is not just about memorizing vocabulary and grammar structures, but understanding listening too. On top of that, teachers need to try to understand the learners' levels carefully and explain how to teach listening, if they intend to teach listening. When many teachers teach listening, they usually skip the words or the whole sentence sometimes. They just take the text and do it completely. The students write these words in empty cells, and the teachers check and repeat the words. This is a good way to improve pronunciation, not to teach listening. In order to teach actual listening, teachers should teach students that in the process of listening, they need to understand correctly, not focusing on understand the meaning. Research by Vandergrift [1] emphasizes the significance of providing listening activities within meaningful contexts. By using real-life situations, authentic materials, and visuals, educators can engage beginner level students and facilitate understanding.



According to Hamouda [2], EFL learners have crucial problems in listening comprehension because universities pay attention to grammar, reading, and vocabulary. Listening and speaking skills are not significant parts of many books and teachers do not consider these skills in their classes. Osada [3] stated that listening is not very important for both teachers and learners, and teachers test not to teach listening and learners learn listening, not listening comprehension. Consequently, it remains the most neglected aspect of language teaching. Hamouda [2] emphasized that comprehending speech is a very difficult activity for students. Learners face a lot of problems when they listen to a language. If teachers are expected to assist learners to improve their listening comprehension, they should comprehend their listening difficulties in understanding spoken passages and teach them effective listening comprehension strategies to be able to solve their listening comprehension problems.

It's not just speaking that conveys meaning – how the other person listens also conveys meaning to the other person, and this helps to make the exchange successful or not. There's hardly any point in someone talking if no-one listens to what is being said. Listening is half of oral communication, and it is a skill that needs to be practised and taken equally as seriously as speaking and writing. Buck [4] suggests that teaching comprehension strategies, such as predicting, inferencing, and using contextual clues, can significantly improve listening skills. By explicitly teaching these strategies and providing opportunities for practice, students can enhance their comprehension abilities.

Although there is an overall high correlation between reading and listening comprehension abilities, it has recently been shown that listening involves a set of skills in its own right [5]. As Flowerdew [6] points out, the distinctive features of listening comprehension can be grouped under two main headings: real-time processing and phonological and lexicogrammatical features.

One of the major differences is that listening comprehension involves real-time processing. As mentioned earlier, “listening text exists in time rather than space” [6], so that listeners must comprehend the message as it is uttered. Listening involves “attention to a continuous stream of speech which is not under the timing control of the listener” [7]. In reading, on the other hand, readers have considerable control over the texts and they can dwell on parts of the text, skip over other parts, backtrack, etc [4; 8; 9; 10].

The second important difference between listening and reading comprehension is that the listener must phonologically recognize unit boundaries that would be marked visually in a written text. Readers can see word boundaries and sentence boundaries, because they are clearly marked by spaces and periods. Even sentence-internal clause boundaries are sometimes visible by commas. On the other hand, word and phrase boundaries are not so clearly marked in spoken language. Listeners themselves must punctuate a flow of speech by recognizing irregular pausing, false starts, hesitations, stress, and intonation patterns. In addition to the phonological features, spoken text has its own particular lexicogrammatical features, which require the application of particular sets of knowledge on the part of listeners.

Although listening comprehension is now well recognized as an important facet of language learning, much work remains to be done. Unfortunately, as Brown [11] observed, a significant number of published courses on listening comprehension and classroom practices in many



schools in many countries continues to demonstrate that listening is still regarded as the least important skill in language teaching. And yet, despite a gradually increasing acceptance of the importance of listening comprehension for second or foreign language learners, the teaching of listening comprehension remains a somewhat neglected and poorly taught aspect of English in many ESL or EFL programs — the Cinderella skill [12]

Conclusion

Teaching listening skills to beginner level students requires an effective combination of strategies and approaches. Contextualized activities, pre-listening activities, comprehension strategies, authentic listening materials, and visual support have all been proven valuable for enhancing listening proficiency among beginners. Incorporating these techniques into language instruction can foster a more engaging and effective learning environment for beginner level students.

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