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## Listening as an Interactive Process: Improving Listening Proficiency

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### ANNOTATION

There is no spoken language without listening, one of the essential elements of spoken language processing, and listening is a topic that is connected to many other fields of study and advancement. This article is about listening literacy based on improving listening skills through reciprocal process in EFL/ESL classrooms.

**KEYWORDS:** fluency, recorded voices, pronunciation, active listening, passive listening, focus, classroom distractions, listening activities, listening comprehension.

### Introduction

Listening is responsible for receiving sounds, comprehending the information transferred in the sounds you hear, valuing the information and replying to it. Here's a quick fact: only 1% of misconceptions result from poor reading, but over 60% are the result of poor listening. If you do not already expressly teach listening to your pupils, it might be time to incorporate exercises. Although the advantages of good listening skills may start in the classroom, they apply to both your student's academic and personal lives. Listening is one of the four main language skills. In addition to speaking, reading, and writing, listening began to be taught in language teaching programs in the 1970s as its value as a skill increased. The importance of teaching listening increased as Communicative Language Teaching gained popularity in the late 1970s, and English language instruction for communication started to play a prominent role globally. Due to the increased focus on listening in the 1990s, auditory understanding played an important role in the study of second and foreign languages.<sup>1</sup> Beforehand as a teacher, difference between listening and hearing should be taken into consideration that is described For effective listening learning and teaching, it's crucial to understand the distinction between hearing and listening. According to one definition, hearing is the reception of sound, while listening is the attribution of meaning to the sound. While listening is active, hearing is passive.<sup>2</sup> A

<sup>1</sup> 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.

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

broad definition of active listening is paying attention to a speaker and hearing with the intent to understand rather than to react. One instance of active listening in the classroom would be a student waiting their turn and paying attention to what their peers have to say before offering their perspective. Because listening gives the student input, it is essential in language classes. Any learning cannot start if the information is not understood at the proper level. Teachers can use listening activities to help students focus on new language features like vocabulary, grammar, and interactional patterns.<sup>3</sup> The fact that listening takes up more than 45% of communication time demonstrates how crucial this talent is to total language proficiency. In the past, listening skills were either taught separately or occasionally in conjunction with speaking exercises. However, the four skills should be integrated, and diverse language practice methods should be used, due to the nature of real-life contact and the little amount of time that most learners have available.

### **Interactive activities**

Teachers constantly hope that pupils are paying close attention to their lessons and assignment guidelines. Unfortunately, they often notice that students are not listening well to what that are saying, which can hinder their ability to learn. Lamentably, for many kids, waiting to speak again is preferred to active listening. Although teachers can provide students examples of good listening, nothing beats letting them practice such skills in groups of classmates, first in pairs. When they overlook important material during instruction, this becomes an issue. To ensure that kids recall more of the material teachers are teaching them, it is a good idea to spend some time specifically teaching listening skills. The success of ESL students will depend on how purposefully teacher arranges his ESL programs to accommodate various learning preferences. They will participate and perform well in class if he does his part by providing them with activities that suit their learning styles. Students can engage in a variety of activities as they develop their active listening abilities in groups or with partners. If a listener is perplexed, she can either ask the speaker to elaborate on anything he just said or ask a question that will shed light on the speaker's intentions. Nonverbal clues are immensely helpful for a student who might feel awkward sharing something with a classmate in a seated or standing pair share during face-to-face dialogues.

#### **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

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<sup>3</sup> 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

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.<sup>4</sup> According to Stanovich,<sup>5</sup> 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. 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

<sup>4</sup> John Field. (1998) Skills and strategies: towards a new methodology for listening. ELS journal, Volume 52, Issue 2. pp 367-368.

<sup>5</sup> Keith E. Stanovich. (1995) Toward an interactive-compensatory model of individual differences in the development of reading fluency. Volume 16, No 1. pp 59-61.

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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