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## **УЛУЧШЕНИЕ НАВЫКА АУДИРОВАНИЯ: ПОЛЕЗНЫЕ ЗАНЯТИЯ**

Уроки слушания слишком часто представляют собой серию тестов на слушание, в которых проигрываются кассеты, учащиеся пытаются выполнять упражнения на понимание, а обратная связь дается в форме «правильного» ответа. В этих типах уроков мы не учим слушанию, а проверяем его. В этой статье мы изучим, какие процедуры могут быть задействованы в обучении эффективному слушанию. В этой статье описываются несколько аспектов обучения слушанию. В нем обсуждается аудирование в коммуникативном обучении языку (CLT), его роль в обучении английскому языку (ELT), предлагаются действия и принципы. Он также предлагает некоторые методы и стратегии для улучшения навыков слушания и выделяет цели обучения слушанию. Наконец, в нем представлены выводы и некоторые предложения, которые можно использовать для достижения целей.

**Ключевые слова:** *слушание, обучение, задачи и упражнения.*

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## **IMPROVING LISTENING SKILLS: USEFUL ACTIVITES**

Listening comprehension lessons are all too often a series of listening tests in which tapes are played, comprehension exercises are attempted by the learners, and feedback is given in the form

of the 'right' answer. In these types of lessons we do not teach listening, but we test it. This article will study what procedures may be involved in actually teaching effective listening. This article outlines several dimensions in the teaching of listening. It discusses listening in Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), its role in English language Teaching (ELT), offers activities and principles. It also offers some techniques and strategies for improving listening skills and highlights goals for teaching listening. Finally, it presents conclusion and some suggestions that can be used to attain the goals.

*Keywords: Listening, teaching, tasks and activities*

### **Listening as one of the main skills of CLT**

Listening is the language modality that is used most frequently. Adults spend almost half their communication time listening, and students may receive as much as 90% of their in-school information through listening to instructors and to one another. Often, however, language learners do not recognize the level of effort that goes into developing listening ability. Not all listening is the same; casual greetings, for example, require a different sort of listening capability than do academic lectures. Language learning requires intentional listening that employs strategies for identifying sounds and making meaning from them.

Listening involves a sender (a person, radio, or television), a message, and a receiver (the listener). Listeners often must process messages as they come, even if they are still processing what they have just heard, without backtracking or looking ahead. In addition, listeners must cope with the sender's choice of vocabulary, structure, and rate of delivery. The complexity of the listening process is magnified in second language contexts, where the receiver also has incomplete control of the language. Given the importance of listening in language learning and teaching it is essential for language teachers to help their students become effective listeners. In the communicative approach to language teaching, this means modelling listening

strategies and providing listening practice in authentic situations: those that learners are likely to encounter when they use the language outside the classroom.

### **Role of Listening in Language Learning**

One of the main reasons for getting students to listen to spoken English is to let them hear different varieties and accents – rather than just the voice of their teacher with its own peculiarities. This will help English language learners be aware of and enable them to understand various accents of spoken English. From its natural order (LSRW), one can understand that, listening is the first and most important of communicative skills. There is saying in Turkmen, “Two ears and one mouth is to listen more and speak less”. The mostly used way of exposing students to spoken English is through the use of taped material which can exemplify a wide range of topics such as news, advertisements, poetry reading, songs with lyrics, telephone conversations, speeches, monologues and radio plays. All these are being authentic material, far more powerful than teachers’ imitations.

Another major role for teaching listening is because it helps students to acquire language subconsciously even if teachers do not draw attention to its special features. How a child acquire mother tongue or how an adult acquire a foreign language, without attending formal classes, in a country where the language is spoken are good examples for it. Listening to appropriate tapes provides such exposure and students get information not only about grammar and vocabulary but also about pronunciation, rhythm, intonation, pitch and stress.

The last, just as with reading students get better at listening, the more as these both receptive skills and compulsory for producing the language. Listening is a skill and any help we can give students in performing that skill will help them to be better listeners.

## **Advantages of Listening in Language Learning**

Listening is what students always find hardest. Unlike a written text, a listening text is generally met just once or twice. Students cannot go over and over it, trying to work out what has been said. Therefore, it gives students insight into being in a live communicative situation. A listening text is realistic, with all the pleasure, challenge (and sometimes frustration) which that entails! (Johnston, 2001). As it is already mentioned, the aim of listening in an English classroom is to enable the learners familiar with various types and accents of English and help them to acquire the language in an authentic way. Different types of listening activities would help teachers in this mission.

## **Some Useful Listening Activities**

In his Oxford seminars on “How to teach English”, Jeremy Harmer, one of the well-known ELT scholars, suggests different types of useful activities, which could be availed by the ELT teachers in their classrooms. Some of them are mentioned below with their short instructions and explanations.

1. Live interview – bring in to your classroom a guest speaker, even your colleague may help you in this activity, brainstorm some questions with your students ahead of time, and have students ask follow-up questions. In this activity, your students will have chance for listening, then for asking their own questions, and then get the answers of their own questions through listening the interviewed.
2. Using pictures – show some interesting and attractive pictures have your students listen to an oral discussion related to the picture, and answer questions about what they heard. Pictures will help them in visualising the situation.
3. Pre-recorded interview-narrative – listen to pre-recorded interviews have several benefits. Teacher may bring interviews in various topics, which may attract students’ interest. Teacher may play the pre-recorded interviews for several times.

As a follow-up activity, teacher may ask to students prepare similar kinds of interviews.

4. Message-taking – students listen to a phone message, airport announcement, etc. and answer questions about what they heard. In this activity, teachers should prepare questions in advance. Questions should be according to the aims of the lesson (like listening for general information or specific information) and not too long or too short.

5. Music and sound effects – listen to songs for mood or message they convey, isolate for grammar points or themes. While bringing songs to the classroom teachers, as in other activities, should keep in mind their students' interests, ages, and levels of language proficiency.

6. News and radio genres – listen to a news broadcast, radio commercials are helpful when we want to introduce authentic language to the classroom. Through these types of listening materials students are having access to real world language, and they are useful in enriching our listening classes.

7. Poetry – as poems are not written for teaching purposes, they are also useful resource in providing authentic language. They can be used to listen for words, mood, and message, predict outcome, and decide on punctuation.

8. Stories – draw a picture about what they heard, graph the results, finish the ending to a story. This type of listening is not only improving listening skills, but also they are useful in improving our students' abilities in predicting and creating their own stories.

9. Monologues – they might be authentic or even prepared materials for teaching listening. In this activity, students are listening several monologues and then they match the speakers with the opinion.

10. Complete the picture – give one student half of a completed picture, partner has the whole picture and describes to the first student how to complete the drawing. This type of listening can take place in pair and group work activities.

### **Basic Principles when using Listening Materials**

Listening is difficult and teachers want to give students practice with as little frustration as possible:

- Wherever possible, give students the chance to predict what they are going to be listening to. One way of doing this is to encourage them to read the tasks (comprehension questions, chart filling, and note taking) they will have to do, before they listen to the tape. By trying to guess the answers, they will work out, to some extent, what they are going to hear. The pictures on the page will also help them in their predictions.
- If students do not understand one key word, they may misunderstand the completely listening text. That is why nearly all the worksheets begin with vocabulary exercise. They are the words that your students are going to have difficulty with, make a list of the problem words and pre-teach those additional words too. However, do remember that when students practise listening, they are not supposed to be studying and memorising a particular new structure or vocabulary group. They do not need to understand every word of a listening text. In a listening class, the aim is for students to understand enough of what they hear to be able to do the tasks. This is how they will become more confident when they hear spoken English. But this will not happen if we insist on them understanding every word of a listening text (Johnston, 2001).

### **Techniques and Strategies for Improving Listening Skills**

In the context of Communicative Language Teaching, teachers want the students to improve the four language skills, listening, speaking, reading and writing. At the same time, when students study grammar and vocabulary, they need to practise using the language by listening, speaking, reading and writing. So the four ways of using the language are also methods for studying. There are useful techniques and strategies for improving students' listening skills.

When we listen, we use a variety of strategies to help us pick up the message. Some of these are connected with understanding the 'big' picture, e.g. gaining an overview of the structure of the whole text, getting the gist (the general meaning), using various types of previous knowledge to help us make sense of the message, etc. Listening in this way is sometimes termed 'gist listening' or 'extensive listening'. Other strategies are connected with the small pieces of the text, e.g. correctly hearing precise sounds, working out exactly what some individual words are, catching precise details of information, etc. This is often called 'listening for detail' (Scrivener, 2009, p178).

### **Goals for Teaching Listening**

A dedicated listening task focuses on listening goals. A goal might understand the text – in part or as a whole. It might be focusing on global gist or on discrete elements like single phrases. Listening does not need to follow up with writing or speaking in order to justify the listening task. Listening for the sake of practice is a reasonable goal.

Instructors want to produce students who, even if they do not have complete control of the grammar or an extensive lexicon, can fend for themselves in communication situations. In the case of listening, this means producing students who can use listening strategies to maximize their comprehension of aural input,

identify relevant and non-relevant information, and tolerate less than word by-word comprehension.

One of the main goals of listening is, listening for meaning. It can be either for general or for specific. To extract meaning from a listening text, students need to follow four basic steps:

- Figure out the purpose for listening. Activate background knowledge of the topic in order to predict or anticipate content and identify appropriate listening strategies.
- Select top-down and bottom-up strategies that are appropriate to the listening task and use them flexibly and interactively. Students' comprehension improves and their confidence increases when they use top-down and bottom-up strategies simultaneously to construct meaning.
- Check comprehension while listening and when the listening task is over. Monitoring comprehension helps students detect inconsistencies and comprehension failures, directing them to use alternate strategies.

According to Scrivener (2009), listening activities should achieve these goals:

1. The activity must really demand listening.
2. It mustn't be simply a memory test.
3. Tasks should be realistic or useful in some way.
4. The activity must actively help them to improve their listening.
5. It shouldn't be threatening.
6. Help students work around difficulties to achieve specific results.

One way to achieve these goals is simple enough. By giving students the questions before the recording is played (rather than after), you will give students the opportunity to listen with a clear aim in mind. In everyday life, we usually have some purpose in mind when we listen: to find out today's weather, to learn something, to be entertained, to discover what someone did next, etc. By giving the



learners a clear purpose in listening, teachers turn the exercise from a memory test into a listening task.

### **Assessing Listening Proficiency**

Any teacher who is conducting a listening class should (1) plan for listening/viewing, (2) preview the tape/video, (3) listen/view intensively section by section, (4) monitor comprehension and (5) evaluate listening comprehension progress. While evaluating listening comprehension progress, teachers should use post-listening activities to check comprehension, evaluate listening skills and use of listening strategies, and extend the knowledge gained to other contexts. The listening is a process oriented activity so; it must have a purpose other than assessment, it must require students to demonstrate their level of listening comprehension by completing some task. In order to develop authentic assessment activities, consider the type of response that listening to a particular selection would elicit in a non-classroom situation.

### **Conclusion and Suggestions**

Many students of English eventually travel abroad, where they are shocked to discover how unprepared they are for understanding real speech – whether native or non-native English. The main reason is students are not getting the listening practice they deserve. So often, teachers are side-tracked from listening goals and drift back towards the familiar safety of teaching vocabulary and grammar. Students need more listening for the sake of listening. Teachers need to give students more practice. And they should give students while-listening practice more than others. Listening can be easy to do and audios should be kept short. Let listeners respond right away. Make sure their responses are visible; make sure that teachers can discern how much they understand and can measure the progress they

make. Take advantage of the huge variety of listening texts available on the internet and other audio-video sources.

Teachers should keep in mind how important it is to have their students “do nothing but listen.” They can of course, keep teaching vocabulary, writing, reading, and speaking. But they should not let those activities steal from the listening portion of class.

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