

ENGLISH LANGUAGE - IMPROVE LISTENING SKILLS

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A. ABSTRACT

Today English has been used as an international language so all of people in the world need to learn to speak English. But not only we learn to speak in English, we need to learn to listen, write, and read in English. On previous section I was told you how to improve English from speaking. Today I want to tell you how to improve English from listening.

Keywords: English Language, Listening Skills, and Student Motivation

B. INTRODUCTION

To understand a foreign speech is a key moment to develop speaking skills. It has been proved that if a person is listening and reading materials on the same topic, he masters grammar and vocabulary faster and better. Today there are a lot of methods to improve listening skills. At the same time the role of listening for comprehension and development of the ability to understand and participate in spoken communication encourage teachers to answer some questions:

- Why students find listening difficult?
- How can we help students build confidence in dealing with authentic spoken English?
- What kind of audio files will help develop listening ability?

Besides, it was necessary for teachers to motivate students to improve their listening skills. So, we had to choose the adequate means of training that don't make listening difficult but create favorable psychological environment to listen to foreign language audio files. The main step to create motivation is to choose audio file correctly. On the one hand, too difficult texts can cause discouragement of students. On the other hand, the absence of difficulties makes listening uninteresting and unattractive.

C. METHOD

a. English Language

English has ceased to be an "English language" in the sense of belonging only to people who are ethnically English. Use of English is growing country-by-country internally and for international communication. Most people learn English for practical rather than ideological reasons. Many speakers of English in Africa have become part of an "Afro- Saxon" language community that unites Africans from different countries. Modern English, sometimes described as the first global lingua franca, is also regarded as the first world language. English is the world's most widely used language in newspaper publishing, book publishing, international telecommunications, scientific publishing, international trade, mass entertainment, and diplomacy. English is, by international treaty, the basis for the required controlled natural languages Seaspeak and Airspeak, used as international languages of seafaring and aviation. Many regional international organizations such as the European Free Trade Association, Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), and Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) set English as their organization's sole working language even though most members are not countries with a majority of native English speakers. While the European Union (EU) allows member states to designate any of the national languages as an official language of the Union, in practice English is the main working language of EU organizations.

b. Listening Skills

Teaching a language is essentially taught to communicate. Therefore, language teaching is to improve students' ability to communicate both oral and written forms. But, to be able to communicate well, students must have language skills. Listening is one of the skills in language teaching that should be taught, before speaking, reading and writing (O'Connor, 1998). Material for listening skills would be interesting to learners in accordance with their level. Ur (1984) states that the exercises for 'listening skills' are more effective if they can understand what have been demonstrated. Therefore, it is advisable to involve students with different types of input, such as' video, audio, text, animation, etc. Furthermore, it is stated that the elements that may be involved are the message, speaker, listener and the setting. The types of activity in 'listening skills' are 'dialogue' which includes 'unscripted dialogue' and 'scripted dialogue', 'authentic dialogue', and 'monologue' that can be used to practice when using media in the classroom. Such activities can be carried out to predict the speech, interpret the words, phrases, and sentences, identify the relevant matters, and to know the intention of the speaker.

Today there are a lot of methods to improve listening skills. The first problem can be explained by the following five statements:

- Students try to listen and understand word by word.
- Students assume failure.
- Students do not have an idea of the listening context.
- Students are not conscious of features of connected speech, word stress, or speed of speech.
- Students are not aware of the listening strategies.

c. Student Motivation

Intrinsic motivation is a response to needs that exist within the learner, such as curiosity, the need to know, and feelings of competence or growth (Eggen & Kauchak, 1994). It exists when someone works because of an inner desire to accomplish a task successfully, whether it has some external value or not (Spaulding, 1992). In other words, intrinsic motivation is a prototype of autonomous internal motivation. In this type of motivation, you are being motivated to do some activities because you find the activity interesting and profoundly valuable so you are there completely what you want to do and it satisfies the basic psychological needs. It is the prototype really willingness and choice. Intrinsic motivation promotes learning and revitalization not only for students and their learning but across the lifespan You feel real sense of willingness and valuation about doing this activity.

Attentive listeners are usually good learners. Unfortunately, many students have poor listening skills, which can be very problematic because students spend considerable time in classrooms listening to lectures during college. Many students believe they are good listeners, unfortunately they don't fully appreciate the difference between hearing and listening. Attentive listeners not only hear, they effectively process the information presented to them.

The following tips and strategies will help you be a more attentive listener:

1. Listen for Meaning

Listening for meaning is a form of active listening. Active and attentive listeners not only pay attention to words, they also focus on the intent of each word—the message a word is intended to communicate. To decipher messages, first determine the central idea being communicated. Then pay close attention to anecdotes, explanations, and other details meant to clarify meaning. While you work to improve listening skills, always pay close attention to the central focus of what is being relayed. While you're listening, and after the listening task has ended, check your comprehension. Did what you learn make sense within the

context of the topic or central idea being communicated? Monitoring and checking comprehension makes sure that your active listening strategy is working.

2. Adjust Your Note Taking Style to the Lecture

Ineffective listeners often attempt to jot down every detail from a lecture. They are under the impression that a detailed outline equates to good notes. Students who utilize this strategy often get discouraged when they review their notes only to find the breadth, detail and lack of focus in their note-taking is confusing and leaves them unable to identify central themes and important topics. Effective listeners adapt their note-taking to the teaching styles of their teachers and lectures. They focus on central ideas and jot down details that expand on, or clarify, the central concepts of a lecture.

3. Tackle Difficult to Understand Material

It's not uncommon for students to tune out professors when they start discussing confusing or complex topics. Even when it's possible to hear every word during a lecture, it can be very difficult to process confusing or complicated concepts. Good listeners harness their mental faculties to process what is being presented.

4. Concentrate and Pay Attention

People who struggle with listening often have a difficult time concentrating. Good listeners must work to develop the ability to concentrate and ignore distractions. This requires the ability to tune out personal worries, thoughts about family members and friends, and thoughts about upcoming activities. Those who can hone the ability to concentrate can improve listening skills.

5. Be Prepared

If you do not complete required reading or review notes from previous lectures prior to class, it is very difficult to process information and attentively listen to lectures. This is why you should never neglect to complete reading or other class assignments.

6. Focus on What's Important

One of the keys of effective listening is the ability to concentrate on central ideas and main focuses. It is a mistake to only be concerned about facts and extemporaneous detail during a lecture. In other words, effective listeners focus on the stories or ideas behind the facts. They then are able to pick up on the

supporting fact, details and evidence for the main concepts, ideals and topics being discussed.

7. Choose to be Interested

Many people tune out lectures because they're bored or disinterested. As a result, they neglect to take notes on key concepts. Effective listeners become interested in the subject material, so they can process the information and pay attention to classroom lectures.

8. Link Past and Current Learning

Human beings learn best when they place what they're learning in a context. One way of improving your listening skills is by actively engaging with the new material that you're learning. This can be done by linking what you've learned in the past with what you're currently learning. As you're listening to new material, situate what you're learning in the context of what you've previously learned.

To use history as an example, the Revolutionary War didn't just happen without surrounding historical events. Leading up to the war, colonists were angered by the housing of British troops in their homes and taxes that were placed on their earnings. At the same time, Britain was involved in international conflicts with other countries, such as France. We can use all this information to put the Revolutionary War into a proper context. This information helps us to understand some of the motivations behind why the colonies rebelled, why Britain was taxing them in the first place, and why France joined in on the side of the colonies during the war.

This is only one example of how contextualizing learning can help encourage improved learning outcomes. In science, students can link what they're learning about biology to previous lessons about simpler organisms. In math, in particular, students need to draw upon techniques they've previously learned to better understand how to approach existing problems. Contextualizing what you're currently learning against what you've previously learned can be key to remembering new information.

9. Be Physically Ready

It's easy to get into bad routines while you're in class. Your attention may start to drift and your mind will wander. You may find yourself staring out of a window or slouching in your chair. In a worst-case scenario, you may find that you're falling asleep as a lecture continues to go on.

This is why being physically ready is an important part of listening. Being physically ready starts with good posture. Make sure that you're sitting up straight instead

of slouching or getting too comfortable. Maintaining good posture can be an important part of staying alert during a lesson. Afterward, make sure to keep your eyes focused on your instructor and maintain eye contact whenever possible. Simple things like this can raise our alertness and help us stay focused on what is being said.

By keeping your eyes on your instructor, you'll also be less likely to miss critical information that's presented on the board or using projection slides. You'll be more likely to catch helpful visual information that your instructor is drawing your attention to instead of missing out. Good posture and eye contact are therefore helpful not only because it keeps you alert, but because it helps ensure that you don't miss out on critical information.

10. Engage with Your Instructor

Part of listening includes understanding when you're not quite understanding a certain topic or concept. When this happens, it's important for you to ask questions to help clarify what is being said. All too often, students are too unsure or shy to ask questions. The truth is that most teachers are happy when students get involved and ask for clarification, so don't be afraid to ask your instructor for more clarification if you're not quite understanding a part of your lesson.

11. Don't Get Distracted

An important part of staying focused and listening attentively is making sure you don't have any distractions. For this reason, you'll want to put away any unneeded materials when you're sitting in on a lesson. In particular, you'll want to put away distracting devices, like mobile phones or tablets. With their connection to the internet and ability to get you in touch with friends, these devices can be particularly distracting. However, you won't want to stop there. You'll also want to put away excessive materials, like books and study materials from other courses, that might take your attention away from what you're currently learning. Eliminating all these distractions can help you stay focused on your current task.

You'll also want to avoid sitting with friends in many cases, unless you're sure that you have the discipline to stay focused when you're around people you know. For many people, friends end up being a distraction because they end up talking with each other or even quietly communicating in non-verbal ways. Even a few extended moments like these can end up with you missing critical information that an instructor is presenting. So, particularly if you know it's hard for you to stay focused, you'll want to sit away from friends in an effort to maintain your concentration.

12. Don't Ignore Your Health

Students are in classes all day, then have homework to take care of at night. They have studying they need to do for tests, and activities on campus they need to get done. In between all of this, it can be easy to forget to eat right and get enough sleep. Unfortunately, doing so can make it that much harder for you to listen in class. A lack of sleep is one of the biggest reasons that students fail to concentrate in class. It's hard to listen, after all, when you're struggling to stay awake. Nutrition also plays a role in keeping alert. Good, healthy eating can help you feel more energized and attentive during your lectures. You'll want to make sure that you're eating right and getting enough sleep if you want to be at your best during class.

D. CONCLUSION

Practice makes you perfect to improve your listening skills. Therefore, you know what to learn based on your learning. You can use the movie to help you more to improve your listening or you can turn off the subtitle to make you improve your listening. You can learn to listen the podcast to make perfect. Hopefully this paper will help all of you to improve your skills like listening.

E. REFERENCES

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