

THE IMPORTANCE OF LISTENING IN LEARNING ENGLISH

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Abstract: This thesis analyses the effectiveness of listening. The authors discuss scientists' views based on the target topic.

Key words: listening, basic language, speaking, reading, writing, pronunciation, word stress, vocabulary, syntax, pitch and accent.

Introduction

Knowing the basics of language is like opening the door to new opportunities. The number of English-speaking people is growing rapidly every year, and now almost one in six speaks English. This language, more than any other, is spoken by people from all over the world who do not have it as relatives. In addition, English is used for most international calls, mail and electronic correspondence, in radio broadcasts, computer texts and communications of air traffic controllers. English is also often the universal language of communication in the field of business and education.

Listening, the very basic language skill is consistently interrelated and intervened with the other language skills - speaking, reading and writing. Until the late nineteenth century written mode is predominant in language learning and then onwards listening began to gain its significance in language teaching. The challenges towards teaching listening are now better understood because of the new strategies contributing to effective listening and moreover the widespread availability of technology supports the language learners in enhancing their listening skills.

Analysing Resources

Listening has an important place in learning as it is one of the four major skills in language acquisition. Even though the other skills such as reading, speaking and writing are essential to develop language proficiency, listening contributes primarily for language expertise. Listening awakens awareness of the language as it is a receptive skill that first develops in a human being. Learning to listen to the target language improves language ability: substantial and meaningful response. Especially in learning a language for communicative purpose, listening plays a vital role, as it helps the language learner to acquire pronunciation, word stress, vocabulary, and syntax and the comprehension of messages conveyed can be based solely on tone of voice, pitch and accent; and it is only possible when we listen. Without understanding input appropriately, learning simply cannot get any improvement. In addition, without listening skill, no communication can be achieved [1].

Also, every study conducted regarding the language skills acquisition has proved that when we communicate, we gain 45% of language competence from listening, 30% from speaking, 15% from reading and 10% from writing. With the highest percentage of involvement in the exchange of information in effective communication, listening has to be considered a language forerunner. Listening, unlike the other language skills, is felt comparatively much difficult by the learners, as it has all its interrelated sub-skills such as receiving, understanding, remembering, evaluating, and responding. But with the advent of communicative language-teaching and the focus on proficiency, the learning and teaching of listening started to receive more attention. However, listening is not yet fully integrated into the curriculum and needs to be given more attention in a language learning setting.[3]

The main reasons why the learners feel listening difficult are:

1) Lack of effort to understand each and every word while listening. Especially in L2 acquisition they are unable transfer their L1 skill easily to a second language.

2) Failure or laziness to build up their vocabulary gradually and this greatly reflects in their listening and keeps them low spirited in acquiring the language skills.

3) Listeners problem with different pronunciation, accents as they stick to one particular articulation.

To conclude, it can be said, without listening skills, language learning is impossible.

This is because there is no communication where there is no human interaction. Also, listening is crucial not only in language learning but also for learning other subjects. But even today, with all the technological advancements in the field of education, learners have problems with listening. The main reasons are: they spend too little time to improve their listening skills; the inappropriate strategies tested on them in a learning setting may be an important reason for their poor listening comprehension. [2]

Conclusion

The problems are also caused from the listening material and physical settings. To acquire high level listening skills, more exposure is given to the learners with variety of listening comprehension. Knowing the context of a listening text and the purpose for listening greatly reduce the burden of comprehension. Listeners can use both bottom-up processers (linguistic knowledge) and top-down processes (prior knowledge) to comprehend. Teachers should play an important role in teaching learners strategies and how to apply them into the listening task. They can help students develop sound strategies for comprehension through a process approach to teach listening. These are some suggestions to overcome the challenges in listening as well as to upgrade the listening skills of students.

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