
RESEARCH ARTICLE

Students' Strategies for Improving Their Listening Comprehension

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ABSTRACT

In order to navigate many of the circumstances that arise in everyday life, one must practice active listening. People listen to audio for a variety of reasons, including amusement, learning in scholarly fields, or gathering important information. Students with a wide variety of hearing problems often show symptoms when they try to comprehend the content delivered in English. Children often find it difficult to absorb spoken information since schools place a strong focus on language, reading, and writing. Most course guides and lecturers tend to downplay the importance of listening. The challenges with auditory perception, particularly those pertaining to hearing, actively processing, and comprehending spoken information, are the main focus of this research. Teachers who are aware of the difficulties that their pupils encounter in the classroom may assist their students more successfully in order to help them improve their comprehension of spoken language and acquire excellent listening skills. This is a result of the teachers' improved ability to relate to and comprehend the emotions and experiences of their students. The significance of helping students develop efficient study habits and improve their English listening abilities is emphasized in this article review. Students who are struggling in other courses could get help from teachers who specialize in teaching English as a second language. In the conclusion, the researcher made suggestions for instructional exercises that both professors and pupils need to partake in.

KEYWORDS

Listening, understanding, techniques, problems, comprehensive strategies.

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1. Introduction

Along with reading, writing, and speaking, listening is one of the four essential practical abilities needed for successful English communication. The most important of these four skills is listening. This study aims to determine the significant value of having this ability, given that it may significantly improve one's performance in a variety of areas. This ability may significantly improve a person's performance in a number of fields (Darti & Asmawati, 2017). Students learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL) must set aside a significant amount of time each day to thoroughly immerse themselves in the English language in order to meet their objective of becoming fluent in the language (Darti & Asmawati, 2017). Throughout one's career, mastering the skill of listening is essential to acquiring a second language (L2) (Kajiura et al., 2021, p.1). Osada (2004) asserts that listening skills may be acquired on their own and do not need active participation. According to Rost (2002), the most important skill for successfully learning a language is listening.

The most useful skill in daily life is listening, which also develops more quickly than other abilities, making it easier to learn new abilities. Since hearing is the sense that is utilized the most in everyday life, hearing enhancement happens quickly. Since hearing is the biggest challenge and has the most room for improvement for students learning English as a foreign language (EFL), listening skills received a lot of attention in this study. One major problem is that the pupils have no control over how fast the lecturer

speaks. A restricted language and lexicon, an inability to recognize signs or cues, a slow rate of auditory information analysis, a lack of attention, and ingrained habits are among the challenges associated with acquiring the talent.

Forming habits that impede the improvement of listening skills. Although these obstacles may be surmounted, they may seriously hinder the learning process (El-Dali, 2017; Kasriyati, 2019; Syaifullah, 2019).

The investigators in this review study began by looking at a number of strategies that are used to improve listening comprehension. They next focused their attention on the challenges that some students had while listening to spoken passages. The aim of this study was to improve teachers' understanding of these intricate elements of listening comprehension so as to encourage the use of efficient teaching strategies. This literature review aims to provide teachers and students with insightful, instructive information on how to teach and improve listening comprehension.

2. The meaning of the listening term

Numerous conceptual frameworks have been developed by academics to clarify the listening process. Hearing, according to Chastain (1971), is the ability to understand spoken language in its organic cadence and rhythm. According to Morley (1972), hearing includes aural grammar, auditory discrimination, identifying and remembering important information, and connecting that knowledge to the relationship between form and sound. Humans can communicate with each other thanks to a sensory sense called audition. According to Postovsky (1975), listening is the process of interpreting meaning that is sent via an activity, as opposed to only detecting sounds and understanding what is being heard. Goss (1982) defined "listening" as the act of decomposing auditory information into lexical elements and giving it meaning. This is carried out to aid in the material's interpretation. A 1985 study by Bowen, Madsen, and Hilferty found that the processes involved in perceiving and comprehending spoken language are essentially the same. First, the students will actively listen to spoken language, which they will then dissect into its constituent lexical and grammatical components. As it is a necessary skill for learning in one's everyday life, listening is an action that has to be done (Nushi & Orouji, 2020). According to Purdy (1997), there are three distinct stages of the auditory process: receiving, understanding, and responding to spoken and nonverbal cues. According to Rost (2002), hearing is a sophisticated cognitive function that requires understanding and evaluation of all auditory inputs.

As stated by Rost (2009), effective communication requires the ability to listen. Effective communication requires listening because it helps us comprehend our surroundings and the problems we face, giving us a clearer perspective of what's going on around us. To put it another way, active listening helps us to comprehend the situation we are in on a deeper level. On the other hand, listening skills enable us to comprehend the situation we find ourselves in. Thomlison (1984) found that listening promotes clearer communication, comprehension, and a more in-depth appreciation of other people's viewpoints. Hearing, on the other hand, enables people to notice and comprehend what is going on around them. Understanding the speaker's phonetic pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar structures, and semantics are all part of this process. One may accomplish all four of these goals at the same time if they have the gift of listening.

3. What Listening Comprehension means

Different scholars have found different definitions for the term "listening comprehension." According to Brown and Yule (1983), listening comprehension is the capacity of a person to comprehend and assimilate information that has been provided to them via auditory methods. When information is provided to them auditorily, they are able to understand it. According to Dirven and Oakshott-Taylor's 1984 paper, listening abilities are the result of teaching methods. "Speech perception," "spoken language understanding," "speech recognition," and "speech comprehension" are a few examples of expressions that might be used to characterize the word. According to Hamouda (2013) and Rost (2002), listening is an interactive process for understanding auditory information. This means that construction is a collaborative process that requires participation from the participants, who take on the role of listeners. Through the process of sound discrimination, recalling prior knowledge, identifying grammatical structures, detecting tension, intonation, and other linguistic or aptitude cues, listeners may comprehend spoken information. The capacity to understand and analyze spoken language is known as listening comprehension, according to Nadig (2013). One may consider the ability to comprehend information via hearing to be one of them. Examples of this phenomenon include understanding the structure of phrases, the meaning of certain terminology, and paying attention to the sounds people make when they speak.

4. Strategies for Improving Listening Comprehension

Consistent with Goh's (2000) perspective, instructors should prioritize enhancing students' comprehension of syntax, pronunciation, and vocabulary prior to instructing them in listening skills. The complexity of teaching listening skills arises from the challenges faced by pupils who struggle to comprehend auditory information. Teaching listening skills to kids who struggle to understand spoken information may be a demanding task. Vandergrift (1999) asserts that the development of a strategy is crucial in the teaching of listening as it empowers students to manage and assess their understanding and reactions to auditory information. Students may enhance their ability to manage and assess their information more efficiently by formulating a strategic

approach. Conrad (1989), O'Malley and Chamot (1990), Rost and Ross (1991), and Azmi Bingol, Celik, Yidliz, and Tugrul Mart identified three prevalent varieties of hearing comprehension in 2014. The year is 2014. The three primary divisions that may be further subdivided are cognitive, socio-affective, and metacognitive. These tactics may need to be modified to suit the student's current level of proficiency.

4.1 Metacognitive Techniques

According to Rubin (1994), students who use metacognitive processes, including planning, confirming, assessing, and altering their learning, may take control of their education. Listeners must first ascertain the goals of a listening assignment before using certain components of auditory language information in order to use metacognitive planning techniques. As a result, individuals will improve their understanding of spoken language. Holden (2004) and Azmi Bingol, Celik, Yidliz, and Tugrul Mart (2014) contend that this approach necessitates that students focus while taking in the provided material. With this method, students learn how to categorize, record, and assess the knowledge they have learned from listening. Students who use metacognitive methods may pick up information more quickly and assimilate it more successfully, claims Wenden (1998). These kids also have the capacity to learn new things throughout their lives, adapt to different situations, have the confidence to ask for assistance from friends, teachers, or family, and evaluate and analyze their own development. Salataci (2002) asserts that including metacognitive techniques in the listening process improves students' motivation and self-assurance in addition to their ability to complete tasks. Evidence from studies by Vandergrift (2004) and Abdalhamid (2012) indicates that superior listeners used twice as many metacognitive techniques as their less skilled peers. According to Henner Stanchina (1987), spoken language comprehension requires the use of metacognitive techniques. The speaker makes the case that skilled listeners are able to draw conclusions to fill in knowledge gaps, add new details to their preconceptions, evaluate how accurate their predictions are, and use their past knowledge and preconceptions to form hypotheses about the text and improve upon them. According to Henner Stanchina (1987), proficient listeners are able to spot comprehension gaps and draw on past information to improve their total comprehension. Differentiate between metacognitive and regulative knowledge. Cognitive knowledge relates to students' comprehension of mental operations, and effective listening skills need the capacity to control one's thoughts. Bacon (1992) offered advice on how to develop into a superb listener. According to Goh (2000), Abdalhamid (2005), and Vandergrift (2003), good listeners use metacognitive techniques (2012). When they cannot understand what is being said, attentive listeners use extra techniques to redirect their attention, whereas inattentive listeners stop listening altogether.

4.2 Cognitive Processes and Methods

Using information from either long-term or short-term memory is the initial step toward comprehending and recalling cognitive processes. Through the processes of formation, decoding, and comprehension, the incoming information is methodically examined. Using a "cognitive strategy" is a way to handle complex events so that you can learn (Azmi Bingol, Celik, Yidliz, & Tugrul Mart, 2014). Derry and Murphy (1986) offered a thorough examination of cognitive processes, characterizing them as "learning tools for problem-solving." Cognitive approaches actively employ or modify learning resources while concentrating on the learning process. Cognitive methods are used by individuals to integrate, store, and recall recently acquired knowledge. Top-down and bottom-up listening strategies are the two main strategies that may be used in cognitive listening. Word-for-word translation, many oral readings, choosing the speaker's vocal intonation, and close examination of the features of the textual material are examples of bottom-up techniques. Logical reasoning, data visualization, predictive modeling, and well-informed approximations are examples of advanced techniques. The aforementioned studies by Abdelhamid (2012), O'Malley, Chamot, and Kupper (1989), Tsui and Fullilove (1998), and Conrad (1985) all came to the conclusion that advanced learners often use top-down methods more frequently than novices. Think-aloud exercises were used to assess the students' listening comprehension skills while they were enrolled in college courses in Spanish. According to the quantitative research findings, individuals used more cognitive strategies than metacognitive ones. That being said, compared to their male counterparts, the female participants used a greater quantity of metacognitive methods. The results of a qualitative study indicate that a variety of qualities, such as enthusiasm, self-control, and the skillful application of past information, are associated with remarkable listening abilities. Several techniques, a variety of methodologies, and strategy adaptation, as needed, are all necessary for effective listening (Abdalhamid, 2012).⁵ Clearly expressed trouble comprehending spoken language.

As to the research done by Azmi Bingol, Celik, Yidliz, and Tugrul Mart (2014), students could face several obstacles in their attempt to comprehend and apply the information they have been provided. The objectives are to raise awareness of these problems and actively look for ways to solve them. This is an exhaustive list of all the many problems.

4.3 The High Standard of Recorded Materials

Occasionally, teachers may include recorded information in their lectures, which may raise doubts among their pupils about its accuracy. This is one of the several choices now accessible to you. This is one potential conclusion that may occur based on the circumstances. While it cannot be definitively said, there remains a possibility that it will occur. The findings of a study conducted by Azmi Bingol, Celik, Yidliz, and Tugrul Mart may be found in the specified locations (2014). Hence, the researchers concluded

that the quality of the auditory environment in the classroom might influence the extent to which students are able to understand the subject being taught.

4.4 Cultural Variations

Considering how much these characteristics affect a person's capacity to acquire a language, language learners should acquaint themselves with the cultural aspects of the language they are learning. These factors directly affect how well someone learns to speak a language. As to Azmi, Celik, Yidliz, and Tugrul (2014), students could have difficulties understanding the subject matter if they are required to listen to information coming from a wide variety of cultural traditions and are exposed to material originating from those varied cultural traditions. Before moving on to the related listening activities, the instructor has a responsibility to provide the class with some background information. The final say in choices made on behalf of the students in the class belongs to the teacher. The wide variety of accents and dialects available might make it more challenging to understand spoken language.

According to Goh's (1999) research, 66% of the students polled agreed with the idea that an accent might affect a listener's understanding. Goh came to these findings based on the data he collected from the kids. Listening to speech may be difficult to understand, particularly if the speaker has a non-native or native accent. The rationale is that any accent might make the message harder to understand. Derwing and Munro (1999).

On the other hand, having prior experience working with an accented speaker might be advantageous if one has already attained a certain level of proficiency. Buck (2001) asserts that those who have solely studied American English might find it challenging to understand foreign dialects, such as Indian English. Buck's investigation yielded proof for this assertion. Buck's results lead us to this conclusion. Buck reasoned that this is indeed the case after closely analyzing the available data. If the speaker has a faint accent that is difficult to make out, the audience can have trouble understanding them. They will find it difficult to understand what is readily available.

4.5 unknown terminology

Azmi Bingol, Celik, Yidliz, and Tugrul Mart argue that some believe it is not difficult for pupils to understand listening readings that employ terminology they are already acquainted with (2014). This is because empirical research indicates that youngsters do not need an excessive amount of effort to comprehend auditory content. During their investigation, one of the subjects they specifically addressed was this. Enhanced comprehension of vocabulary enables youngsters to more easily engage in activities and sustain long-term motivation. Pupils are likely to get confused when they are tasked with utilizing terminology in contexts when these phrases would be inappropriate due to their many meanings. Given that several words possess the capacity to convey multiple meanings concurrently, this situation arises.

4.6 Duration and Rate of Listening

In research conducted by Azmi Bingol, Celik, Yidliz, and Tugrul Martin 2014, it was shown that a student's degree of competence might have a substantial impact on their ability to remember information when they listen to longer segments. Students in lower-level classes may find it challenging to complete listening tasks that require sustained focus for more than three minutes. Extended periods of listening are divided into shorter intervals, leading to enhanced comprehension among students and reducing exhaustion in learners. According to Underwood (1989), auditory perception gets more difficult as the tempo accelerates. The students may have difficulty comprehending the speakers if they speak at a quick pace. Acquiring knowledge of the vocabulary of the second language (L2). Listeners may find it more difficult to comprehend the speaker's words since they lack control over the speaker's speed. According to Underwood (1989), there are many obstacles that hinder the achievement of sufficient listening comprehension. The inability to adjust the tempo of listening to a speaker hinders comprehension and presents a barrier to comprehending. Furthermore, the recurrence of words poses a challenge for listeners in comprehending your message. The students cannot replay the audio once again.

5. Earlier listening investigations

One study carried out was "Exploring the Utilization of Listening Strategies by Students at Five Mexican Universities" by Chulim (2008). The investigation was one of the actions taken. The results showed that the most often utilized note-taking approach was to concentrate on specific information, while the least common technique was to apply previous knowledge. The results also showed that the most popular strategy was to focus on specific facts. Contrary to popular belief, there was little variation in the listening strategies used by various educational establishments.

According to Vandergriff's (2008) findings, there is a strong link between the use of metacognitive teaching strategies in the classroom and the effective improvement of students' listening abilities. The results of Lui's 2007 research showed a significant and positive relationship between a person's listening abilities and the strategies they use. The investigation compared the listening strategies employed by Taiwanese college students to their general listening proficiency. Experienced listeners have been shown

to have far greater degrees of intellectual awareness, socio-affective awareness, and metacognitive awareness than average listeners. In 2009, Mohseny and Raeisi carried out a study to examine the listening strategies used by Iranian students learning English as a second language with their levels of language proficiency.

The results of the research showed a significant and favorable relationship between a person's overall level of competency and their usage of listening tactics. Most pupils make frequent use of cognitive techniques. Tavakoli, Shahraki, and Rezazadeh (2012) found that there was a relationship between Iranian students' metacognitive awareness and how well they performed on the hearing section of the IELTS. This association holds true for Iranian learners of all ability levels. The research particularly looked at how performance and cognitive awareness relate to one another. The study's findings show a strong relationship between participants' overall performance and their level of metacognitive awareness while listening.

In order to ascertain how education affects students' metacognition and how that affects their language proficiency and listening comprehension, Rahimi and Katal (2012) conducted research. Standard auditory training was given to some of the students without any additional teaching strategies. Speaking abilities and metacognitive awareness increased more significantly in learners who received metacognitive teaching concepts than in those who did not. The numbers that were acquired supported this claim.

Mahmoud and Ahmed (2020) looked at the listening difficulties that thirty Sudanese college students learning English as a second language had noted. The researchers looked at these issues in the same order as they were presented in a survey. After completing an information-gathering survey, Mahmoud and Ahmed concluded that students struggled to understand casual language, colloquial idioms, and intricate grammatical structures in audio texts. Furthermore, students said that when they were initially exposed to a listening activity, their inattentiveness made it difficult for them to understand.

To get a deeper understanding of the hearing challenges faced, Rakhman, Tarjana, and Marmanto (2020) conducted a case study involving six first-year students from the Indonesian English Department. All of the individuals were in their first year of study and ranged in age from 19 to 20. Rakhman and his colleagues found that the children had a variety of difficulties understanding English, which they attributed to the language barrier. Having trouble remembering things right away, dealing with words that seem the same but have various meanings, and having trouble speaking in a smooth and rhythmic voice were some of the problems. They used a variety of techniques, including surveys, interviews, and observation, to get their data. According to the study, auditory comprehension abilities are a common area of difficulty for EFL students.

6. Some Effective Tips Can Help Students Who Struggle with Listening Comprehension

The following advice may be useful to students who are having trouble with auditory understanding. Here are a few instances:

1. To help students have a more accurate grasp of native speakers' speech, educators should give necessary aural aids. Pupils must be able to participate in activities that are customized to meet their specific needs.
2. It is the instructor's responsibility to provide interesting listening activities that will hold students' interest and improve their listening strategies. The purpose of these exercises is to evaluate the student's comprehension and use of a variety of listening strategies to enhance their performance on the assignments.
3. Teachers need to familiarize their pupils with the norms of pronunciation in order to provide them with the necessary tools to understand the wide variety of short, spontaneous spoken language. Instructors may also advise their pupils to mimic native speakers' pronunciation.
4. Teachers need to use a variety of media to impart a wide range of information to students. These media include plays, movies, television newscasts, lectures, daily chats, and interviews.
5. It is essential that pupils in a teacher's classroom be made acquainted with regional and national accents from all around the world.
6. A range of difficulty levels should be included in listening activities; for students with advanced abilities, the exercises should evolve from simple readings to more challenging topics.
7. It's critical that instructors provide their pupils with a firm understanding of the language being utilized as well as pertinent contextual information when they listen to various items.
8. Teachers have an obligation to provide appropriate feedback on their students' performance since it might encourage them to correct their mistakes, become more excited, and feel more confident while taking part in listening exercises.

7. Conclusion

In English language programs, listening comprehension is sometimes disregarded. Many comprehension mechanisms must be used at once to interpret complex auditory information. When new information becomes available, it's critical that we process it thoroughly, commit it to memory, make connections with previously acquired knowledge, and modify our interpretation in light of both what we already know and any additional revelations. In educational contexts, teachers should teach students the skill of

active listening. There isn't a single best approach that works in every English classroom. As students make progress in their English studies, it is essential that listening tasks become more complex. Both everyday interactions and the process of learning a language depend on active listening.

But it seems that the kids' listening skills are lacking. There are a number of problems, but the most important ones are that the listening material is not sufficient, the student has inappropriate study habits, and the learner does not spend enough time studying independently to acquire the necessary skills. It is important to provide students with opportunities to participate in a variety of listening activities so they may learn new strategies and concepts from each encounter. There isn't one effective method that works in every English school. It is the instructor's responsibility to choose and implement effective listening strategies. As students advance in their English education, they should come across more challenging listening assignments. This review of the literature offered methods for improving students' listening comprehension and pointed out problems that hindered their ability to comprehend spoken language. The findings of this research might improve listening comprehension instruction and student learning.

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