
RESEARCH ARTICLE

Students' Strategies for Improving Their Listening Comprehension: A Review of Literature

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ABSTRACT

Listening is essential for functioning in various contexts throughout one's everyday life. People listen to audio for several reasons, including for their amusement, to learn academic material, or to acquire information that is valuable to them. When students seek to comprehend what they are taught in English, they often display a wide variety of hearing impairments. Because reading, writing, and language are stressed so heavily in schools, students often have trouble comprehending what they hear. Most course books and teachers do not emphasize how important it is to listen. This research focuses on challenges associated with hearing, listening, and comprehending what is being said. When instructors are aware of the obstacles their students confront in the classroom, they can better assist their students in creating effective listening habits and increasing their listening comprehension. This is because teachers are more able to empathize with their students' experiences. This article review highlights the significance of assisting students in developing efficient learning strategies and building their English listening capabilities. Students struggling with other topics may be seen by teachers who instruct English to foreign language speakers. In conclusion, the researcher provided some suggestions for educational activities that should be participated in by both students and instructors.

KEYWORDS

Listening, understanding, techniques, problems, comprehensive strategies

ARTICLE INFORMATION

ACCEPTED: 15 December 2022

PUBLISHED: 10 January 2023

DOI: 10.32996/jhsss.2023.5.1.9

1. Introduction

Listening is regarded as one of the four essential practical competencies for communicating in English, reading, writing, and speaking. Out of these four skills, listening is the most crucial one. Given that this skill can significantly improve one's success in other areas, this investigation aims to determine the substantial value of having this ability. This talent has the potential to significantly improve one's performance in other areas (Darti & Asmawati, 2017). To attain their aim of speaking English fluently, students of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) need to spend a significant amount of time daily immersed in the English language (Darti & Asmawati, 2017). Improving listening skills is essential for acquiring a second language (L2) in one's lifetime (Kajiura et al., 2021, p.1). The skill to listen does not require active engagement and can be cultivated on one's own, as stated by Osada (2004). According to Rost (2002), listening is the most crucial skill for effective language acquisition.

Listening is the skill used the most in daily life, and it also improves more rapidly than other abilities, making it simpler to learn new talents. Since hearing is the most used in day-to-day living, hearing improves quickly. This study placed a significant emphasis on the skill of listening since it is the ability that provides students of English as a Foreign Language with the most significant challenge and their most beautiful possibility for progress (EFL). The pupils' inability to exert any influence over the pace at which the instructor speaks, Significant challenges that can be encountered when learning the skill include a limited vocabulary and lexicon, an inability to perceive signals or cues, an inability to analyze what is heard rapidly, an inability to focus, and established

learning patterns that do not encourage the growth of listening skill. These challenges can be overcome, but they can make it more difficult to learn the skill (El-Dali, 2017; Kasriyati, 2019; Syaifullah, 2019).

In this review study, the researchers began by reviewing some of the strategies employed for listening comprehension. Afterwards, they focused on some of the students' challenges while listening to oral passages. This study aimed to improve educators' understanding of these challenging listening comprehension aspects to encourage effective teaching strategies. It is intended that the results of this literature review will provide instructors and students with insightful and instructional perspectives on the method of instructing and developing listening comprehension.

2. The meaning of the listening term

Academics have developed various conceptualizations to describe the act of listening. According to Chastain (1971), listening is the ability to take in native speech when presented at a regularly timed tempo. Morley (1972) defines hearing as aural grammar, auditory discrimination, the selection of important information, the maintenance of that information, and the coupling of that information to the relationship between sound and meaning form. Hearing is a sense that allows humans to communicate with one another. According to Postovsky (1975), who formulated this argument, listening differs from sound detection and auditory understanding in terms of the meaning conveyed by each activity. According to the definition of "listening" provided by Goss (1982), parsing the information taken in by hearing into lexical parts so that it may be given meaning. This is done so that the information can be interpreted. Hearing and comprehending spoken language is essentially the same thing, according to a study that Bowen, Madsen, and Hilferty carried out in 1985. The students will begin by listening to spoken language and then segment it to dissect its meaning by deconstructing it into its lexical and syntactic components. Listening is an action that should be done since it is a crucial skill for gaining knowledge in one's day-to-day life (Nushi & Orouji, 2020). Purdy (1997) suggests that the process of hearing may be broken down into three distinct stages: receipt, interpretation, and reaction to spoken and nonverbal stimuli. According to Rost (2002), hearing is a complicated process that requires one to grasp what they have heard to appreciate what they have heard fully.

Rost (2009) indicated that listening is one of the most crucial abilities for effective communication since it enables us to have a more accurate perspective of the world around us, and listening is a crucial component of good communication because it improves our ability to understand the circumstances we find ourselves in this situation. In other words, listening allows us to grasp better the situation we're facing. On the other hand, listening skill enables us to comprehend the situation we find ourselves. Listening helps one communicate, understand, and have a better knowledge of what other people are saying, while hearing enables one to comprehend what is occurring around them, as stated in the research by Thomlison (1984). This process involves gaining an understanding of the meaning as well as the grammatical structures, vocabulary, and how the speaker pronounces words. All four of these goals have the potential to be accomplished simultaneously by a single individual at the same time if that someone is skilled in the art of listening.

3. What Listening Comprehension means

Many different scholars have arrived at their unique definitions of what exactly is meant by the term "listening comprehension." Listening comprehension is defined by Brown and Yule (1983) as the capacity of an individual to comprehend what they have heard after the information has been provided to them. When the information is aurally provided to them, they can grasp it. In the essay by Dirven and Oakeshott-Taylor (1984), listening abilities are characterized as the product of instructional strategies. Phrases that are appropriate for usage in connection with the definition include "speech comprehension," "spoken language understanding," "speech recognition," and "speech perception," as some examples of the words that can be used. Both Rost (2002) and Hamouda (2013) demonstrate that interpreting what one has heard through listening is a participatory process. The act of building meaning is a collaborative process that involves the participants, who are the listeners. Listeners can comprehend verbal information through sound discrimination, prior knowledge, grammatical forms, tension, intonation, and other linguistic or aptitude cues. According to Nadig (2013), listening comprehension encompasses a variety of activities that include understanding what has been spoken aloud and interpreting what has been heard. The ability to comprehend what one has heard might be considered as such. Examples of this include understanding sentence structure, the meaning of specific words, and paying attention to the sounds that people make when speaking.

4. Strategies for Improving Listening Comprehension

In line with Goh (2000), teachers should first focus on helping their students improve their understanding of syntax, pronunciation, and vocabulary before teaching listening skills to their students. It is because teaching listening skills can be complex for students who have trouble understanding what they hear. This is since teaching listening skills to pupils who have difficulty comprehending what they hear can be a challenging endeavor. According to Vandergrift (1999), developing a strategy is an essential component of the teaching of listening because it enables students to control and evaluate their knowledge and responses to what they have heard. Students can control and evaluate their knowledge more effectively when developing a strategy. According to Conrad

(1989), O'Malley and Chamot (1990), Rost and Ross (1991), and Azmi Bingol, Celik, Yidliz, and Tugrul Mart, the three most common forms of hearing comprehension are as follows: (2014). (2014). Cognitive, socio-affective, and metacognitive are the three significant subcategories that may be broken down further. These strategies will probably require some adjustment to cater to the student's current level of competence.

4.1 Metacognitive Techniques

According to Rubin (1994), students may exert control over their learning by employing metacognitive techniques, including planning, confirming, assessing, and altering it. To properly implement metacognitive planning strategies, listeners, for example, will need to identify the goals of a listening assignment and exploit some aspects of auditory language input. They will be better able to understand audio information as a result. Holden (2004) and Azmi Bingol, Celik, Yidliz, and Tugrul Mart (2014) contend that employing this approach necessitates students' attention while absorbing the information provided. This method teaches students how to categorize, record, and assess the knowledge they have received from listening. Wenden (1998) stated that students who employ metacognitive techniques could learn more rapidly and successfully integrate the material. Furthermore, these students can be lifelong learners who can adapt to any situation, have sufficient self-confidence to ask for assistance from friends, teachers, or families, and monitor and evaluate themselves. As stated by Salataci (2002), incorporating metacognitive methods into the listening process increases students' ability to complete tasks and their motivation and self-confidence. According to Vandergrift's (2004) and Abdalhamid's (2012) findings, proficient listeners used twice as many metacognitive methods as their less skilled peers. The employment of metacognitive methods is critical to the process of listening comprehension, according to Henner Stanchina (1987). According to the speaker, competent listeners can make deductions to fill in understanding gaps, integrate additional information with their ongoing predictions, evaluate their predictions, and use their previous information and forecasts to construct theories about the text and improve their theories. Skilled listeners, in line with Henner Stanchina (1987), may recognize gaps in their comprehension and draw on prior information to boost their total level of understanding. Differentiate between regulative and metacognitive knowledge. Knowledge of cognition refers to learners' comprehension of what is going on, and having control over their cognition is required for solid listening skills. Bacon (1992) offered advice on how to be an excellent listener. According to Goh (2000), Vandergrift (2003), and Abdalhamid (2005), effective listeners engage in the use of metacognitive methods (2012). When they cannot grasp what is being said, listeners with more experience use more tactics to redirect their attention, whereas less competent listeners stop listening.

4.2 Cognitive Processes and Methods

The initial step toward accurately comprehending and remembering cognitive techniques is incorporating information stored in either short-term or long-term memory. As incoming input is evaluated, the formation, decoding, and comprehending processes are carried out sequentially. Using a "cognitive strategy" is a way to deal with complex events so that you may learn (Azmi Bingol, Celik, Yidliz, & Tugrul Mart, 2014). Derry and Murphy (1986) described cognitive processes in-depth as "learning tools for problem-solving." Cognitive approaches are concerned with learning and directly utilize or modify learning resources. Learners use cognitive techniques to absorb, retain, and recall recently learned material. The two fundamental listening strategies that may be applied in cognitive listening are top-down and bottom-up. Word-for-word translation, reading the spoken material aloud multiple times, deciding on the speaker's voice tone, and paying attention to the written content features are just a few examples of bottom-up techniques. Higher-level approaches include reasoning, visualization, forecasting, and informed estimations. All of the studies mentioned above, including those by Conrad (1985), Tsui and Fullilove (1998), O'Malley, Chamot, and Kupper (1989), and Abdelhamid (2012), indicated that advanced learners are more likely to use top-down methods than novices. While studying Spanish in college, the students' levels of listening comprehension were assessed using a think-aloud technique. The quantitative research findings demonstrated that participants used more cognitive than metacognitive methods, but those female participants used more metacognitive strategies than male participants. According to the results of a qualitative study, excellent listening is influenced by various elements, such as enthusiasm, self-control, and a suitable application of past information. Utilizing various tactics, flexibility to change strategies as needed, and varied methodologies are other aspects of effective listening (Abdalhamid, 2012).5. Significant Listening Comprehension Issues.

Depending on the findings of research presented by Azmi Bingol, Celik, Yidliz, and Tugrul Mart (2014), there are various obstacles that students might have when attempting to assimilate the information they have received. The objective is to raise one's level of awareness of these issues and to proactively look for ways in which these issues may be resolved. The following is a list of the many problems.

4.3 The High Standard of Recorded Materials

Some instructors could occasionally use recorded material in their lectures, the veracity of which might be questioned by their students. This is one of the options that are open to you at this time. This is one of the outcomes that are a possibility depending on the situation. Even though it cannot be said with complete assurance that it will take place, there is still a chance that it will. The results of an investigation carried out by Azmi Bingol, Celik, Yidliz, and Tugrul Mart may be accessed at the following locations:

(2014). Consequently, the researchers concluded that the caliber of the acoustic environment in the classroom might have a role in the degree to which students can comprehend the material being taught there.

4.4 Cultural Variations

Due to the direct influence of these characteristics on a person's capacity to acquire a language, students of a language would do well to get acquainted with the cultural features of the language they are learning. This is because these factors directly impact a person's ability to learn the language. According to Azmi, Celik, Yidliz, and Tugrul, it may be difficult for students to understand the topic if they are exposed to content that derives from a wide range of cultural traditions if they are required to listen to information from such a vast range of cultural traditions (2014). Before beginning the accompanying listening activities, the teacher's responsibility is to provide some fundamental knowledge to the class. The final decision to act on behalf of the students in the class rests with the teacher. The ability to select from an overwhelming number of dialects and accents may make it more challenging to understand what is being said.

According to the findings that Goh (1999) obtained from the students, 66 percent of them agreed with the assumption that a listener's understanding may be affected by a speaker's accent. The findings that Goh gathered from the pupils revealed this information to him. It is possible to have difficulty understanding what is being said when it is heard, particularly if the speaker has an accent that is either native to the speaker or not native to the speaker. It is because either accent may make it difficult to grasp what is being stated. (Munro and Derwing (1999).

On the other hand, if it has been acquired, prior experience working with a speaker with an accent may be helpful. Listeners who have solely studied American English are said to have trouble understanding foreign accents, such as Indian English, according to Buck (2001), whose study proved this to be true. From Buck's research, we may infer this. Buck looked over the facts and concluded that this must be the case. It will be challenging for the audience to understand the speaker if they have a hard-to-detect accent. They will find it harder to understand the information being obtainable.

4.5 unknown terminology

According to the claims made by Azmi Bingol, Celik, Yidliz, and Tugrul Mart, a school of thought contends that it is not too challenging for students to grasp listening texts that make use of vocabulary that is already familiar to those students (2014). This is because evidence suggests that children do not need excessive effort to grasp hearing materials. During their research, one of the topics that they brought up was precisely this. If children have a better understanding of the meanings of the words they hear and read, it may be simpler for them to participate in activities and keep their motivation up over time. It is more probable that pupils will get confused when they are given the task of using terms in situations when such words would not be acceptable since they may have more than one meaning. Since many words have the potential to indicate many meanings simultaneously, this is the case.

4.6 Duration and Rate of Listening

Azmi Bingol, Celik, Yidliz, and Tugrul Mart's (2014) study found that a student's competency level may significantly influence how well they can recall knowledge when they listen to extended sections. Completing listening exercises that call for concentration for more than three minutes may be difficult for students enrolled in lower-level courses. Longer listening sessions are broken up into shorter ones, resulting in better student understanding and lessening learner fatigue. Underwood (1989) states that hearing becomes more challenging as the pace increases. The pupils can have trouble understanding the presenters if they talk too rapidly. Gaining an understanding of the L2 language's vocabulary. It could be more challenging for listeners to understand what is being said since they have no control over the speaker's pace. Underwood (1989) states that various barriers to adequate listening comprehension exist. One cannot control how quickly one listens to the speaker to regulate the rate at which communicators communicate creates a barrier to understanding. Second, word repetition makes it harder for listeners to understand what you're saying. The audio cannot be played for the pupils once again.

5. Earlier listening investigations

Chulim's (2008) study, "Exploring the Utilization of Listening Strategies by Students at Five Mexican Universities," was one of the projects. One of the initiatives was the investigation that was done. The results showed that concentrating on specific material was the technique most commonly utilized while taking notes and applying previous knowledge were the techniques least frequently employed. The results also showed that focusing on specific bits of information was the most typical strategy. Despite frequent assertions to the contrary, the listening strategies used by the various educational institutions did not significantly vary from one another.

Vandergrift (2008) found a strong link between the employment of metacognitive teaching strategies in the classroom and the effective development of students listening abilities. There is a significant and positive association between a person's capacity to

listen and the approaches they use, according to Lui's 2007 investigation of the listening strategies employed by college students in Taiwan and comparisons with the student's overall listening abilities. It has been shown that experienced listeners possess substantially more significant levels of metacognitive awareness, intellectual awareness, and socio-affective awareness than average listeners. In the research Mohseny and Raeisi conducted in 2009, a comparison was performed between the listening strategies used by Iranian English as Foreign Language students and their levels of linguistic competency.

The study's results demonstrated a solid and favorable relationship between using listening tactics and one's general level of competence. The majority of pupils regularly use cognitive methods. The IELTS listening section performance of Iranian students and their metacognitive awareness are related to both competent and less proficient Iranian learners, according to Tavakoli, Shahraki, and Rezazadeh's (2012) study focused on the connection between cognitive awareness and performance. The study results show a significant relationship between participants' general performance and metacognitive awareness (listeners).

The research that Rahimi and Katal conducted (2012) aimed to find an answer to the following question: "How does education's influence on students' metacognition affect their understanding of listening methods, comprehension, and language skills?" Standard auditory training, but no teaching strategies, was given to some of the learners. Those learners experienced less substantial improvements in their metacognitive awareness and speaking abilities than learners who were given metacognitive teaching concepts. The data that was collected demonstrated this to be the case.

Mahmoud and Ahmed (2020) explored listening issues in the order in which they were reported in a survey conducted with another thirty Sudanese college students who were learning English as a foreign language. After completing a questionnaire designed to collect data, Mahmoud and Ahmed concluded that students had difficulty grasping informal language and colloquial idioms and hearing texts with sophisticated grammatical structures. Students also claimed that they did not pay enough attention, which contributed to the fact that they had difficulty understanding a listening exercise the first time they were shown it.

To have a deeper comprehension of the problems in listening that were experienced, Rakhman, Tarjana, and Marmanto (2020) conducted a case study with six first-year students from the Indonesian English Department. All participants ages ranged from 19 to 20, and all were in the first year of their studies. Rakhman and his colleagues found that the children had various difficulties when listening to English, which they attributed to the language barrier. Among these obstacles were problems with short-term memory, trouble with homophones, and problems with the rhythm of speech. They acquired their information using various methods, including questionnaires, interviews, and observations. According to the findings, students learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL) often struggle with challenges connected to their ability to comprehend what they hear.

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

Students might benefit from the following advice, which will assist them in overcoming some of the difficulties they now have with their ability to comprehend what they have heard. Several examples of these are as follows:

1. Teachers should give fundamental listening tools for learners to use to support learners in a more precise grasp of native speakers' speech. Students must be able to listen to activities customized to their needs.
2. The teacher is responsible for preparing listening activities for the class that will attract the pupils' attention and assists them in developing listening skills and strategies. These activities test the student's capability to comprehend what they have heard and urge them to use a broad array of listening strategies to benefit as much as possible from the tasks.
3. To properly prepare their students to hear the wide distinct varieties of short natural speech, tutors must familiarize their pupils with pronunciation conventions. Teachers can also push their pupils to mimic native speakers' pronunciation.
4. Educators have to expose pupils to a wide variety of information through a variety of media, including but not limited to lectures, broadcast newscasts, movies, plays, notifications, ordinary discussions, and interviews.
5. It is important to encourage pupils in a teacher's class to get familiar with regional and national accents worldwide.
6. Exercises in listening should range in difficulty from simple readings to more challenging material for students with more expertise.
7. During the time students spend listening to various listening materials, their teachers should offer them background information and linguistic understanding.

8. It is the responsibility of teachers to offer appropriate feedback on their students' performances since doing so may inspire students to correct their mistakes, enhance their excitement, and help students grow their self-confidence when engaging in listening activities.

7. Conclusion

Listening comprehension is often not emphasized in English language programs. The application of many comprehension techniques simultaneously is necessary for understanding detailed auditory information. As we listen to the information, we need to comprehend it, remember it, link it to what comes next, and adjust our understanding based on what we already know and what is revealed in the future. In classrooms, students should be taught how to listen effectively. There isn't a single approach that works best in every English classroom. As students study English, listening exercises should grow harder for them. Listening is crucial for everyday conversation in addition to language acquisition.

On the other hand, the children's capacity for listening appears to be lacking. There are a few problems, the most significant of which are the listening material, the learner's inappropriate learning practices, and the amount of time the learner spends studying on their own is insufficient to acquire the skill. Students should be given opportunities to participate in various listening activities and come away from each with new ideas and strategies. There is no one method that is ideal for every English classroom. The educator's responsibility is to select and implement effective listening strategies. Listening activities should become progressively more challenging for pupils through their English studies. This literature review proposed techniques to improve students' listening comprehension and highlighted factors that hampered their ability to comprehend what was being heard. The findings of this research can potentially improve instruction and learning in listening comprehension.

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