
HOW CAN YOUNG LANGUAGE LEARNERS IMPROVE THEIR LISTENING SKILLS?

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Abstract. Listening is a creative skill that demands active involvement. The listeners share their knowledge from both linguistic and non-linguistic sources. The process of listening comprehension tasks is always accompanied with anxiety. Listening anxiety not only affects the results of listening comprehension, but also listening ability. Some research shows that in low-anxiety classroom environment, listeners participate actively and effectively. In order to help learners to be successful in English listening class, it is necessary to create a favorable atmosphere in the classroom. This paper has been conducted in 2022, it tries to find out some factors that affect learners listening anxiety in EFL classrooms and to put forward some suggestions to improve the condition.

Keywords: a creative skill, a favorable atmosphere, linguistic and non-linguistic sources.

Аннотация. Умение слушать — это творческий навык, требующий активного участия. Слушатели делятся своими знаниями как из лингвистических, так и из нелингвистических источников. Процесс выполнения заданий на аудирование всегда сопровождается тревогой. Беспокойство при прослушивании влияет не только на результаты восприятия на слух, но и на способность слушать. Некоторые исследования показывают, что в классе с низким уровнем тревожности слушатели участвуют активно и эффективно. Чтобы помочь учащимся добиться успеха

на уроках аудирования английского языка, необходимо создать благоприятную атмосферу в классе. Этот документ был проведен в 2022 году, в нем делается попытка выяснить некоторые факторы, влияющие на тревогу учащихся при прослушивании в классах EFL, и выдвинуть некоторые предложения по улучшению этого состояния.

Ключевые слова: творческое мастерство, благоприятная атмосфера, языковые и неязыковые источники.

Introduction. The results of this study showed that most of the participants didn't get enough listening activities during secondary school classes, and many of them admitted that they get lack of listening understanding when they had practiced the listening tasks. Many students faced a difficulty in understanding the speech if the used dialect in the recorder was unfamiliar to them which could be considered as the main reason of anxiety.

Listening is a receptive skill through ears. It involves identifying the sound patterns. When one listens, he uses his audio systems to receive individual sounds (letters, stress, rhythm and pauses), and he uses his brain to convert these sounds into meaningful messages which convey ideas and thoughts.

Young (1992) stated that problems of listening comprehension can be considered as results of many factors such as insufficient emphasis on listening in appropriate teaching methodologies, inactive listening strategies and the lack of student vocabulary, but the major obstacle which is important role for receiving the information can provoke anxiety. Macintyre & Gardner (1994:10) define language anxiety as "The feeling of tension and apprehension specifically associated with second language contexts," including speaking, listening, and learning.

In English as a Foreign Language learning, listening may be the most difficult one among the four language skills. Some researches claimed that in order to be successful listener and perceiver, learners must be able to participate actively and strategically in the listening process within a low-anxiety in listening process (Xu, 2011).

This paper aims to identify the causes of listening anxiety and to provide several recommendations that may help the students to overcome or cop with these problems which sometimes encounter them. The researcher will check some listening support strategies such as the input to see whether they are effective to reduce students listening anxiety. "Anxious students are likely to experience mental block, negative self which affects their ability to process information in - talk and ruminate over a poor performance language learning contexts" (Macintyre and Gardner (1991: 87

Aim of the study:

This study aims to determine the causes of listening comprehension anxiety and to help the students avoid and reduce some of the reasons of this problem. It is an attempt to answer the following questions,

- 1.What are the main causes of anxiety and how can they be reduced?
- 2.Why are EFL learners poor in listening skill and how can they improve their listening skills?
3. What are the strategies that can be used to enhance students ability in listening activities?

Hypotheses of the study. It is hypothesized that:

- 1.Most EFL students have poor listening skills.
- 2- Anxiety causes students weakness in listening skill activities.
- 3.Some listening strategies are not effective enough to help students prove their listening skills.
- 4.Inactive involvement strategies are the main causes of anxiety in most EFL classrooms.

Significance of the study. This study gains its significance from the fact of the importance of avoiding students anxiety during dealing with listening skill activities to develop their level in English Department at faculty of Education and to highlight the helpful techniques used by the staff members for carrying out the required activities in this skill.

Conclusion. Language learners are often overwhelmed by too much anxiety in the process of learning foreign languages. Since listening skill is one of the essential skills which should be mastered and used for communication used in real life situation. Anxiety is one of the important factor that hinder students' listening capacity and performance in EFL classrooms, therefore, it should be paid much attention by both teachers and students. This study has discussed some factors which may cause listeners' anxiety in listening, such as teachers and students' factors teaching procedure...etc. Of course there are many other factors under different conditions which cannot be completely discussed here.

According to the results of the study it can be concluded that the EFL English students major at Faculty of Education suffer from listening anxiety during dealing with listening skill activities which caused general weakness and lack in mastering the presented activities in front of them. It showed that the defect is due to teachers' techniques used for teaching listening skill and other factors.

I will identify a number of learning theories, together with a list of considerations and cautions with some insights that I have gained from trying to make listening in my classroom more comprehensible.

The nature of listening. "Listening is an active not a passive operation. Garvie. With this in mind I would like to emphasise three things:

The importance of understanding this concept of listening being an active engagement. That is, as a listener, the mind is actively searching for meaning.

The importance of what Krashen calls comprehensible input (CI) or that we acquire when we understand what people tell us or what we read, when we are absorbed in the message. Individual progress is dependent on the input containing aspects of the target language that 'the acquirer has not yet acquired, but is developmentally ready to acquire.

This seems to imply the importance of ensuring that the language level is matched to the learners, which means teachers must understand their learners' abilities.

Why we need to develop listening skills

If someone is giving you a message or opinion, then of course you have to be able to understand it in order to respond.' (Brewster, Ellis, Girard).

Listening skills need to have a 'real-life' meaning, Donaldson says that children need 'purposes and intentions' which they can recognise and respond to in others these human intentions are the matrix in which the child's thinking is embedded.

This implies that we need to carefully select materials and purposes for practising listening skills and that they need to have an authentic meaning to young learners.

Theories I consider when I develop listening skills

Keeping in mind that listening is an active process, Brewster, Ellis and Girard caution that asking children to 'listen and remember' can make them 'anxious, places a great strain on their memory and tends not to develop listening skills.

The teacher would support children's understanding more effectively, if they direct their pupils attention to specific points that have to be listened for using activities that actively support learners understanding and guide their attention to specific parts of the spoken text.

Wells says a lot of children's learning 'is dependent on making connections between that they know and what they are able to understand in the speech they hear' but they don't learn only listening, motivation for learning language is to be able to communicate 'using all the resources they have already acquired to interact with other people about their needs and interests.' This seems to be in line with social constructivist theories.

Piaget believed that a young learner 'constructs' or builds understanding over time.

Vygotsky believed that learning was ahead of development and for development to occur, interaction with adults or peers who are more

knowledgeable is needed. This has been termed the 'zone of proximal development'.

Bruner extended Vygotsky's ZPD theory by defining the role of the more knowledgeable 'other' as someone who is actively involved in the learning processes by closing the gap between what has been partially and fully understood. This has been termed 'scaffolding'.

Some considerations for classroom listening

These are some of the things I consider when I try to develop my students' listening. (Brewster, Ellis & Girard)

Give the children confidence. We should not expect them to always understand every word and they should know this.

Explain why the children have to listen. Make sure the learners are clear about why they are listening, what the main point or purpose of the activity is.

Help children develop specific strategies for listening. An important strategy that the teacher should teach is 'intelligent guesswork'. Pupils are used to drawing on their background knowledge to work out something they are not sure of.

Set specific listening tasks. I try to think of listening in three stages, pre-listening, while-listening, post listening and have activities for each stage.

Listening does not have to rely on the availability of a cassette or pre-recorded material. Most listening is teacher talk.

What I do to be more comprehensible

There are a number of ways that I try to make myself easier to understand.

- Keep sentences short and grammatically simple
- Use exaggerated intonation to hold the child's attention
- Emphasise key words
- Limiting the topics talked about to what is familiar to the child
- Frequently repeating and paraphrasing

Recommendations. Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are suggested:

- 1- since listening skill activities are very important in language teaching process, it is necessary to lay stress on the suitable techniques used for this issue.
- 2- The listening skill should be considered from early stages of education.
- 3- Students of English major should try to practice their language specially in this skill whenever get chance.
- 4- A great amount of vocabulary and special expressions should be taken into account by the students.
- 5- The students should be aware of many grammatical issues used in language communications.
- 6- The students need to listen to different language varieties used by native speakers in order to be accustomed with the high speed use of the target language.

Listening is an active process, as the mind actively engages in making meaning. It is therefore our duty as teachers to ensure that the materials we use are comprehensible to our young learners, as well as within the range of what they are developmentally ready for. Listening is also hard work! And can be stressful! So in order to maximise the potential for acquisition of language, we need to ensure that our young learners are not stressed about this process.

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