

IMPROVE LISTENING SKILLS USING DIFFERENT TECHNIQUES

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Abstract

This study explores effective techniques for improving listening skills in language learning. It highlights strategies such as active listening, note-taking, repeated exposure, and the use of multimedia resources. These methods enhance comprehension, concentration, and retention. Integrating varied techniques fosters better understanding and supports learners in developing overall communication competence.

Keywords: listening skills, active listening, language learning, multimedia resources, comprehension techniques

INTRODUCTION

Listening is one of the most important skills in language learning. It helps people understand others and communicate effectively in daily life. However, many students find listening difficult because they cannot catch every word or understand different accents. The good news is that listening skills can be improved with regular practice and the right strategies. During language teaching, listening comprehension has often been neglected and considered secondary to speaking and writing. Isn't this quite surprising, since in communication we use listening skills more than any other skill? According to estimates, nearly 40 percent of our daily communication is devoted to listening, 35 percent to speaking, 16 percent to reading, and only 9 percent to writing.

Despite this, in the process of communication and language acquisition, listening comprehension remains one of the least focused-on skills, which is somewhat puzzling. However, before long, language specialists realized that

listening, like other skills, needs to be taught separately. As a result of modern innovations, new approaches have emerged, and one of them is podcasting, which has already become popular due to its effective impact. The word “podcasting” is formed from the words iPod and broadcasting. Thus, there are four skills that must be mastered in learning the English language, and to fully master English, all four skills need to be acquired.

Listening is one of the important skills that must be understood and developed in learning English. Another way to improve listening skills is by using songs. Some people enjoy listening to songs, and this can be an effective tool for developing listening skills. In addition, visual aids, watching videos and films on platforms such as YouTube, practicing shadowing techniques, and carefully listening to the speeches of famous people have proven to be highly effective in developing listening comprehension skills among language learners. These methods consistently demonstrate their strong impact on improving learners’ ability to understand spoken language successfully.

It is worth giving another example here to illustrate the importance of listening skills. Imagine that a baby, from the moment of birth, begins to hear various sounds in the surrounding environment and starts to imitate them. The baby does not begin learning language based on grammar rules; instead, he or she learns where to place words and how to form sentences through listening. Gradually, the child starts to speak fluently. Language is acquired not by memorizing grammar rules or vocabulary, but by hearing people around them and listening to different sounds. Therefore, we can understand how important it is to develop listening skills in the process of language learning. This article discusses several effective ways to improve listening skills.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In foreign language learning, listening plays a crucial role in developing communicative competence. According to Ortiz (2020), English has been identified worldwide as one of the languages that is most widely taught as a second language, and this generates difficulties in students that have been related to poorly

didactic methodologies and lack of interest from those involved. Gómez González & Rivadeneira Barreiro, (2025) explained that listening skills are considered crucial in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning because they involve the ability to understand and process spoken language effectively. For this reason, researchers have explored various methods and strategies to improve listening skills. Listening to English songs that have a slow pronunciation can help learners understand how English words are pronounced correctly. Through this process, listeners are also able to learn and remember new vocabulary. In addition, learning through songs makes listening practice easier because many of the words are already familiar to learners. Listening to English songs can help learners expand their vocabulary and improve their understanding of grammar.

Recent studies have highlighted the effectiveness of the shadowing method in developing second language listening skills. Furthermore, Sumiyoshi and Sveta Nant (2017) discovered that Japanese students believed shadowing helped them improve both their speaking and listening skills, and they appreciated the feedback they received during the process. More recently, Binarkaheni (2022) confirmed the effectiveness of shadowing in improving students' listening skills through research on learners' perceptions. The findings showed that shadowing practice not only improved students' pronunciation but also helped them acquire new vocabulary and develop a better understanding of grammar.

Many studies have demonstrated that listening comprehension can be improved when visual elements are included alongside audio materials. In this regard, movies are considered highly motivating learning tools because they cover a wide range of topics and combine both visual and auditory input. The use of films in language learning provides learners with contextual clues through images and sound, which help illustrate events and situations more clearly. Additionally, movies offer paralinguistic information, such as facial expressions, gestures, and tone of voice, which supports learners in understanding spoken language more effectively. With the rapid development of technology, learners now have more opportunities to access an Podcasts are digital audio files available on the internet

that users can download and listen to on devices such as mobile phones or MP3 players, usually free of charge. They are often produced in a series of episodes and have become an innovative tool for improving students' listening skills. Students can repeatedly listen to topics that interest them, which allows them to practice listening independently and at their own pace.

Podcasts provide flexible and accessible learning opportunities. Learners can listen to different topics such as comedy, music, films, politics, and public figures anytime and anywhere. This flexibility makes podcasts a practical and efficient learning resource for language learners because they require little storage space and are easy to access.

Previous studies have highlighted the effectiveness of podcasts in language learning. Rosell-Aguilar (2007) found that podcasts improved students' academic performance, motivation, and language skills, including listening, speaking, pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar.

METHODOLOGY

This study aims to investigate the effectiveness of various listening activities in improving the English listening skills of eighth-grade students learning English as a foreign language. The research was conducted at a secondary school, and a total of 16 students from the same class participated in the study. The participants were selected based on convenience sampling, as they were accessible and regularly attended English lessons.

Instruments and Materials

The study employed a combination of authentic audio and visual materials, including English songs, selected episodes from popular TV series (such as Merlin or Stranger Things), podcasts, YouTube videos, and speech recordings from famous personalities. For the song activity, students were given the song lyrics with missing words and were asked to fill in the blanks while listening. For TV series episodes, students watched at least three episodes, noted unfamiliar vocabulary, memorized the words, and practiced retelling the scenes orally. Podcasts of at least 30 minutes from educational channels. Next, they engaged in

the TV series activity, where they practiced listening, vocabulary acquisition, and oral retelling. The third stage involved listening to podcasts and YouTube videos to further expose students to authentic English and to practice self-directed listening. Finally, shadowing exercises were conducted in small groups, with each student performing the speech they had practiced. Throughout the study, students were encouraged to actively participate, note unfamiliar words, and apply the words in context.

PROCEDURE

In the first stage of the study a listening activity based on a song was implemented to develop students' listening comprehension and vocabulary recognition. The selected song for this activity could be "English Love Can Hurt Sometimes" by Ed Sheeran. This song was chosen because of its slow tempo, emotional tone, and clear pronunciation, which makes it suitable for beginner and intermediate learners.

Before the listening activity, students were provided with the printed lyrics of the song in which several words were intentionally removed. Their task was to listen carefully to the song and fill in the missing words while the song was playing. The teacher first introduced the activity and explained the instructions to ensure that all students understood the task. Then the song was played in the classroom and students listened attentively in order to identify and write the missing words. The calm and emotional nature of the song helped students feel relaxed and focused during the activity. Since the song is performed at a relatively slow pace, students were able to hear the pronunciation clearly and had enough time to write the missing words. This helped them practice listening for specific information and improve their vocabulary recognition.

After the activity, the teacher checked whether the students were able to correctly complete the missing words in the lyrics. The teacher then reviewed the answers with the class and repeated the pronunciation of the words that students missed or could not write. Through this process, students practiced correct

pronunciation and also learned new vocabulary and grammar structure.

<https://youtu.be/-rgtr9M1dUA?si=CQ1Wetbx5oG9meC1>

Lovin' can _____

Lovin' can _____ sometimes

But it's the only thing that I _____

And when it gets hard

You know it can get hard sometimes

It is the only thing that makes us feel _____s found in the song.

In the next stage of the study, the teacher suggested that students choose a TV https://t.me/Merlin_english_subtitles series based on their interests. The options included popular series such as Merlin or Stranger Things <https://t.me/RexiecatBotx>, https://t.me/Netflix_Seriesbots as well as other series preferred by the students. Allowing students to select content according to their interests increased their motivation and engagement in the learning process.

Students were then assigned to watch at least two or three episodes per day at home with subtitles. The use of subtitles helped them better understand the context and meaning of the dialogues. During this activity, students were required to identify and learn at least 50 new words from the series. These unfamiliar words were written down in their vocabulary notebooks along with their meanings.

After completing the viewing task, students were asked to retell the content of the episodes in their own words. They recorded their retelling as a voice recording and submitted it to the teacher. The teacher then listened to the recordings and monitored students' progress in terms of vocabulary use, pronunciation, and overall comprehension.

In the following stage of the study students were required to practice listening through podcasts on a daily basis. Each student was assigned to listen to at least one podcast per day and write its transcription.

https://t.me/bbc_radio_podcast,

<https://t.me/podcast365>,

https://t.me/Road_Podcast https://t.me/Podcast_English_listening.

Alternatively, students who preferred structured materials could complete one listening section (such as Section 4) and write the full transcription of the audio. <https://t.me/Ieltslisteningtest40/4>

To support this activity, students were provided with links to various podcast channels and listening resources where they could find suitable audio materials. This task helped students improve their listening accuracy, spelling, and ability to recognize spoken language in detail.

By writing transcriptions regularly, students developed better concentration and became more familiar with different accents, pronunciation patterns, and vocabulary used in authentic speech.

Students are assigned to choose a speech by a famous person and practice shadowing it for 30 minutes every day. At the end of each week, a competition is held to see how accurately students have mastered the speaker's pronunciation. Winners are rewarded with small prizes. This exercise improves listening comprehension, enhances pronunciation, strengthens both speaking and listening skills, and boosts motivation. Students can use following websites" TED TALK" "VOA Learning English"

After that, students can both relax and improve their listening skills while also enhancing their general knowledge. How? By using various educational websites that easily capture their attention and cover subjects like history, science, literature, math, and psychology. Students can enjoy watching these videos, whose length depends on the video itself, and retell them afterwards, which is very effective. Using the links below, students can watch videos from such useful websites.

"TED-ED", ["https://youtube.com/@teded?si=fda8ENwUvSsIoBWp](https://youtube.com/@teded?si=fda8ENwUvSsIoBWp)
Kurzesagt"<https://youtube.com/@kurzesagt?si=QW-OoOSlyFncao9v>

Data Collection and Analysis

Data were collected through observation of students' participation, completion of listening exercises, and performance in shadowing activities. A questionnaire was also administered to gather students' perceptions of the

effectiveness and enjoyment of the activities. The collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistics to determine improvements in students' listening comprehension, vocabulary acquisition, pronunciation, and overall engagement in listening tasks.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study has shown that the use of a variety of engaging and interactive listening activities can significantly improve students' listening skills in learning English as a foreign language. The integration of songs, TV series, podcasts, educational videos, and shadowing techniques provided students with rich exposure to authentic language in different contexts. These activities not only helped students develop their listening comprehension but also enhanced their vocabulary, pronunciation, and overall language proficiency.

Moreover, allowing students to choose materials based on their interests increased their motivation and active participation in the learning process. Regular practice, such as listening to podcasts, watching series with subtitles, and performing shadowing exercises, enabled students to become more confident and independent learners. The use of technology and real-life materials also made the learning process more enjoyable and meaningful.

Overall, the findings suggest that combining different listening strategies and resources is an effective way to improve students' listening abilities. Therefore, teachers are encouraged to adopt diverse and student-centered approaches in order to create a more dynamic and successful language learning environment.

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