

أهمية الاستماع في تعلم اللغة الأجنبية

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الملخص العربي :

الاستماع أحد أهم مهارات التحدث وإنتاج اللغة من مختلف الناس حيث الجميع يرغب في فهم ماذا يريد الآخرون قوله باللغة الانجليزية من خلال الحديث المباشر أو عن طريق الاستماع للتلفاز أو الراديو ، المسرح ، السينما أو الأشرطة المختلفة.

والطلاب يحتاجون إلى فهم الاستماع والاهتمام بالحديث من خلال تنوع نغمات الحديث من الآخرين الذين يستمعون للغة المستهدفة للتعلم . هذا كله يؤكد على أهمية الاستماع بشكل جيد قبل النطق باللغة المستهدفة ، والذي يجب إعطائه أهمية في تدريس اللغة الانجليزية .

وهذه الورقة تسلط الضوء على معنى الاستماع في اللغة الأجنبية ، ومدى ارتباطه بمهاره الاستماع من أجل إنتاج أصوات لها معاني في اللغة المستهدفة ، وركزت على طريقة تعلم اللغة الأجنبية ، وطرق اكتسابها مع توضيح مفهوم الاستماع ، ولماذا؟ وطبيعة وأول درجات عملية التعليم ، كما تم تحديد أنواع الاستماع ، والفرق بينها ، وأهمية كل نوع ، وكيفية تدريس الاستماع، والأساسيات التي يستوجب على الأستاذ اتباعها ، والدور الذي يلعبه من أجل الفهم الحقيقي للاستماع ، وأهميته في استيعاب اللغة الأجنبية

إنه وبدون شك فإن الأطفال الطبيعيون يولدون ولهم القدرة علي إنتاج أصوات مختلفة، وهذه الأصوات لا يكون لها معنى تام إلا بالاستماع لديهم من خلال تكرارها وفهمها بغض النظر على الجنس والشكل واللون والطبقة الاجتماعية والموقع الجغرافي أو حتى مستوى الذكاء .

واتفق الباحثون والمهتمون بالتعليم والتعلم حول اللغة الأولى " لغة الأم" إلا أنه حتى اليوم لا يوجد إجماعا حول تعلم اللغة الأجنبية من قبل الباحثين. وهناك العديد من العوامل التي قد تؤثر تأثيرا مباشرا على تعلم اللغة الأجنبية ، مثل : السن، البيئة المحيطة ، المواقف التعليمية ، طرائق التدريس... إلخ، ولكل ما ذكر فإن مهارة الاستماع هي الأساس في فهم الأصوات واستيعابها.



إن طريقة تدريس مهارة الاستماع لم يتم التركيز عليها بالصورة الصحيحة والكافية في كثير من المجتمعات ومن بينها المجتمع الليبي حيث يقوم المعلم بعرض بعض التسجيلات الصوتية على طلابه ثم يقوم بعدها بطرح أسئلة عليهم لقياس مدى فهمهم وإدراكهم بهذه التسجيلات ، والتي ينتج عنها الانتقال إلى التحدث حول الموضوع، ولكن مهاره الاستماع تُختبر عن طريق بعض الكلمات المتشابهة صوتيا ، ويُطلب من الطَّلاب وضع علامة أو دائرة على الكلمة التي يسمعها ، ومن هنا يقوم المعلم بتسلم التسجيلات الصوتية والأوراق الاختيارية لمعرفة مدى قدرة الطالب على تمييز الأصوات المتشابهة.

وفي ختام هذه الورقة تم اختيار بعض الاقتراحات التي تساعد الأستاذ على تدريس مهارة الاستماع بالطرق التي نعتقد أنها سليمة وصحيحة.

The importance of listening in teaching a foreign language

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Listening is one of the most important skills in speaking and producing or understanding any piece of language from different people as Harmer (2007: 132) says “Most students want to be able to understand what people are saying to them in English, either face-to-face, on TV or on the radio, in theaters and cinemas, or on tape, CDs or other recorded media”. Students need to listen with comprehension to connected discourse which may rang from understanding of various utterances spoken by others who use the target language to be learnt. This may indicate that listening skill is essential and occurs before speaking. Teachers who teach a foreign or a second language should be aware of the sequence of learning skills and what should be given the priority in teaching. In this paper, it may be desirable to start by examining what is generally meant by listening skill in teaching and how it is related and integrated to speaking skill in order to produce meaningful of sounds of language.

Learning a Foreign Language

Undoubtedly, all normal children are born with the ability to make sounds, but such sounds do not take a shape or form and become meaningful only through constant hearing and repetition of those sounds (see Finocchiaro &

Bonomo 1973; Fromkin & Rodman 1993). Fromkin & Rodman (1993: 432) say that “All normal children everywhere learn language. This ability is not dependent on race, social class, geography, or even intelligence (within a normal range). This ability is uniquely human). Although there is some consensus among scientists about acquisition of someone’s mother tongue, to date there is no such agreement on foreign language learning (Finocchiaro & Bonomo 1973). No one certainly knows with absolute how second or foreign language is acquired. On one hand, language acquisition seems to be guaranteed for children up to about the age of six (see Harmer 2007). Children at this age are able to learn languages with incredible facility but this ease of acquisition becomes gradually less as they move towards puberty and becomes difficult. On the other hand, acquisition is the way how people get language from the environment without real conscious effort. It is also acquired in informal situation with out any systematic way or ways to pick the language. This may indicate that people do not think about grammar or vocabulary or worrying about with bits of language go where. However, Klein (1986:14) stated that “A second language can be acquired in a variety of ways, at any age, for different purposes, and to varying degrees”. Acquiring can be without guided or tutor in order to make the way of processing is leaning and systematic. It is also important to cite what Fromkin and Rodman (1993:422) stated “Anyone who has attempted to learn a second language in school or when visiting a foreign country knows that it is different from learning our first, native language”. This may indicate that the learning or acquiring a language require some instruction in order to facilitate learning and mastering a language.

Generally, in both learning and acquisition to take place, children need to hear and exposure a lot of language because the exposure and hearing skill is absolutely vital in the operation of language process. The exposure of target language gives children typical social and emotional interactions. The ability to listen to different and all sounds, utterance and other features of the language, which go on around the children right from their childhood helps them to learn a language. This comes to the conclusion that the much the children hear the language the much they hear in which that language is used (see, Harmer, 2007; Finocchiaro & Bonomo, 1973).



Furthermore, learning a foreign language is different in many concepts from learning the first language (mother tongue) even for children at the young end of our age range. It is different due to the fact that the first language is already a huge system that a child has in place; because, in comparison, the child will face such a small amount of the foreign language; and because it is ‘foreign’ often the language belongs to people in a distant and strange culture (Cameron , 2012).

Why Listening?

As teachers we believe that listening is good for all students’ pronunciation at any level and they need to listen in order to be able to understand what others say to communicate with them. In acquiring mother tongue a child needs to listen due to understand the spoken sounds/words and then s/he tries to repeat the sounds or words to react in order to express his/her own desires, needs, feeling, emotion and so on. Cameron, (2012) states that

Listening can be seen as (primarily) the active use of language to access other people’s meaning, whereas speaking is the active use of language to express meanings so that other people can make sense of them. The labels ‘receptive’ and ‘productive’ uses of language can be applied to listening and speaking respectively.(40)

Moreover, listening is a receptive skill because the person receives the information which s/he gets trough communication. However, sometimes listening is known as aural skill because oral is related to the sense of hearing. Thus, language is not just isolated skills but it is one integrated skill in communication.

In additional to that, listening is the basic skill of communication and exchanging of language. It is clear that in any communication aspect there are at least a speaker and listener who share the same code. They both take a part of speaking and listening in the operation process of any communication. Besides, interaction between speaker and listener does not take place unless the message is properly received and understood. Thomas (1995: 20) points out that “A hearer who fails to establish the utterance meaning correctly or at all may fail to understand the force the speaker intended”. This indicates that listening in any piece of language or message initiated with hearing to the

sounds, voices, utterances...etc. to get the meaning and understand the message. This is also illustrated that children need to be able to listen to the varieties of the features that have been mentioned. And the children require being encouraged to repeat such features when they needed them. Therefore, speech appears to be universal to all human beings capable of producing and hearing it, while they have been many cultures and speech communities. This may lead to say that speech is the real application of language that a person hears and understands automatically and unconsciously through exposure to a speaking environment.

Furthermore, Fromkin and Rodman (1993:64) pointed out that “knowing a language means knowing the words of that language. When you know a word you know both its form (sound) and its meaning”. They also added (ibid: 112) that “Speakers of a language recognize the grammatical sentences of their language and know how the words in a grammatical sentence must be arranged”. This is also expresses the notion that sounds in isolation do not give complete meaning but they are the core stone in every meaningful word or a sentence related to target language.

The Natural of Listening

Listening is the ability to identify and understand what other people are saying. This involves understanding a speaker’s accent and his her way of pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary and comprehension of meaning (Dakin 1974). Moreover, Underwood (1974:1) defines listening as “an activity of paying attention to and trying to get meaning from something we hear”. Listening is a skill of sense that is related to speak a language but it is distinct process than hearing which involves merely perceiving sounds in passive way while listening takes an active and immediate analysis of the streams of various sounds. The natural of listening is crucial and essential in any language due to the fact that people cannot develop speaking skill unless they also develop listening skill they must understand what is said to them through listening. It is also important not to forget the purpose of listening which is to enable students *for example* to learn how and what to listen. Moreover, listening sometimes seems to be too difficult for children or students to understand and this one of the natural phenomena in which learners should



try to overcome. As Harmer (2007:195) suggests “listed solutions for situations where students are having real trouble with listening material”.

Moreover, children/ students do not learn a language by storing all words and sentences in some massive mental dictionary because none can store all the words or in particulate all sentences that the person heard or produced. But children learn to understand sentences they have never heard before (see Fromkin and Rodman; 1993).

Although we all believe that learning a language goes through various steps and processes starts from listening, speaking, and reading and writing (see Harmer, 2007), it is not also the case. Fromkin and Rodman (1993: 420) stated that “Language arts are not lost to the deaf”. This means that the way of learning of sign language is quite similar to the way of teaching and learning spoken language. As (ibid) stated that “Given the universal aspects of sign and spoken. It is not surprising that deaf children of deaf signing parents parallel the stages of spoken language acquisition. They start with single signs similar to the single words in the holophrastic stage then begin to combine signs”. It is not surprising that sign language is more or less having the similar procedure steps to learn it. And it has its own grammar and system as spoken language. The only difference in this process I may think about is the listening skill.

Types of Listening

According to Al-Ashab and Lakshmi (2013) listening is of two types. The first one is gist listening or casual listening and the second type is focused listening. Referring to first type, listening as a whole and comes out with the main point or the gist of the target message. Listening to the news over the radio is referring to the first type which sometimes is called extensive listening or casual listening because it does not need more attention while the second type focused listening. This is to listen carefully and attentively with a purpose and comes out with the details of the important facts and events. The listener focuses on the specific information when s/he listens for specific purpose which is also called intensive listening. This may give a student the opportunity to know the reason for listening, and the teacher may help students to know what type of listening s/he wants. There the teacher must

ask his/ her students to listen attentively to the listening materials in order to get the accurate objectives.

By the same token, Anderson & Lynch (1988) cited in Nunan (1989), they distinguished between two types reciprocal listening and non-reciprocal listening. Reciprocal listening refers to these listening tasks where there is the opportunity for the listener to interact with the speaker, and to negotiate the content of the interaction. Non-reciprocal listening refers to tasks such as listening to the radio or a formal lecture where the transfer of information is in one direction only—from the speaker to the listener. Nunan (ibid) pointed out that *identify spoken signals from the midst of surrounding sounds; segment the stream of speech into words; grasp the syntax of the utterance(s); in interactive must listening formulate an appropriate response.

Harmer (2007:134) distinguished between intensive and extensive kinds of listening. People or students can enjoy listening when they understand them such listening to CDs in their cars, on MP3 plays, DVDs videos or on the internet. This can take place without a teacher or a textbook to help them. Harmer (ibid) pointed out that “intensive listening is different from extensive listening”. Students listen specifically in order to work on listening skills and in order to study the way in how English language is spoken.

All types of listening are needed in learning a foreign language as (Field 1998) cited in Cameron (2012:41) “Different types of listening activities are required to ensure a language-focus). This is also crucial that input and output are often used to refer to listening and speaking due to the fact that both of them are active uses of language although they are differ in the mental activity involved and demands that they make on learners of language in terms of finding and shearing meaning. Moreover, cognitive differences between listening and speaking help us understand why the metaphor of input and output is inadequate for language learning. Evaluation learners’ language skills and resources showed that their listening comprehension skills were very good, but that their production often showed a lack of precision and grammatical accuracy (ibid).

Hearing and Listening

Understanding speech is said to be active receptive skill as Al-Ashab and Lakshmi (2003:88) say “listening is a creative activity and an important



language skill”. They also added that, “listening helps to improve speaking, reading and writing skills in learning language” (ibid). Thus, understanding means the recognition of the signification of sentences. This is more or less called hearing. To understand any speech, learners have to recognize the communicative function of the sentences and what is meant by the sentence they hear. What this involves is the recognition of how the use of particular sentence relates to what else has been said in the interaction. Cook (2001: 98) emphasizes that “Listeners do need to know the structure of the sentence in some way”. He also (ibid : 97) states that “As with reading, the listener’s knowledge of the context of situation and background knowledge of the culture and society are crucial to listening comprehension”. All the mentioned points come up as a result of practicing listening and speaking in order to get fluency through responding in a language (see Alderson and Beretta, 1992). Therefore, listening is the activity of recognizing what function sentences have in the speech while hearing is the activity of recognizing the signals conveyed through speech which may have a certain signification subsidiary skills of listening. The subsidiary skills students need in order to listen with comprehension to connected discourse which may range from the understanding of several utterances spoken by others. In order to understand the speech or the text, the listener must know something about the target language which s/he is going to listen, such as sounds words, patterns, intonation, stress and when pauses take place (see, Al-Ashab and Lakshm, 2003 ; Finocchiaro and Bonomo, 1973). So, understanding such area may need special skills such as identifying the correct sounds guessing the meaning in the given speech or context. In order to achieve this learners acquire skills when they get the opportunity to listen to good modals of spoken English (Al-Ashab and Lakshm, 2003). Moreover, Finocchiaro and Bonomo (1973: 106) stated that “In listening, the learner must hear and identify (because they signal meaning)”:

1. the phonemic sounds of the language and eventually, the personal or dialectal variations of the phonemes as spoken by some native speakers;
2. the sequences of sounds and their groupings; the lengths of the pauses; the patterns of stress and intonation;

3. the function words and their required sound changes depending on their position before other words.
4. the inflections for plurality, tense, position, etc.;
5. the sound changes and function shifts (involving positional shift) brought about by derivation(just, unjust, justice, justly);
6. the structural groupings (of verbals , of prepositional phrases, etc.);
7. the word-order clues of function and meaning;
8. the meaning of words depending on the context or on the situation being discussed;
9. the formulas, introductory words, and hesitation words which occur in speech;
10. the cultural meaning embedded in the message.

According to Finocchiaro and Bonomo (1973) the understanding of decoding of any message or speech depends on the learners familiarity with each of the elements mentioned above and on his/her expectation of them in a variety of situations due to the fact that s/he has heard them many times in different combinations and in situations in which they are appropriate. All these skills are developed over a long period of time.

Furthermore, Ur (1991:105) says “the objective of listening comprehension practice in the classroom is that students should learn to function successfully in real-life listening situations”. This is also indicates that students listen to the sounds of the target language then they practice those sounds and understand the meaning. Listening –speaking, usually- but the essential point is that they need to be able to understand what is said in order to function satisfactorily in the situation (ibid).

Teaching Listening

Cook (2001) states that

Guides to the teaching of listening appear almost every year; some textbooks are aimed specifically at listening, others include listening comprehension. Yet there is little SLA research concerned with the process of listening as a part of speaker’s use of language (94).

Cook (ibid) also points out that listening is as a vehicle for learning. And mentioned three elements access to vocabulary, parsing and memory



processes while Mary Underwood (1989) cited in Cook (2001:97) that in teaching listening there are three stages of teaching which are pre-listening where the students activate their vocabulary and their background knowledge; while-listening, where they develop the skill of eliciting messages and post-listening which consists of extension and developments of the listening task. The students carry out a task in which they have to listen for information in a short piece of discourse and then have to complete or fill the exercise gaps then check the correct mistakes in a text. This means that the teacher asks the students to listen to tapes of modals recorded of people speaking spontaneously and to work out information and knowledge from them then check accuracy (see *ibid*). listening activities is leading to communication purposes in which the target language is developed through speaking. This may confirm that as Yule (1996: 1) says “We do know that spoken language developed well before written language”. The development of listening produces true picture of speaking as Cook (2001: 98) says that “Much teaching of listening comprehension has made the student show some sign of having comprehended, whether through answering questions, carrying out tasks, or in some other way”.

Cameron (2012: 40) points out that “To contrast understanding in a foreign language, learners will use their existing language sources, built up from previous experience of language use”. This indicates that in active listening, the goal is to make sense of what learners have listened. The learners should take part of communication and practice activities, in doing so emphasis their understanding the meaning and their contribution in the discourse confirm that learning and use are tightly interconnected when a learner uses language adopting in her or his oral activities. Moreover, many varied uses of language may encourage the learner to move from partial to more complete understanding of aspects of language and develop a greater range of language skills.

Listening principles and teacher’s role

As we know that the most and the main source of listening for students is the voice of their teacher. It is also important to know the way that teachers talk to students and the manner in which they interact with them. Teachers to be good and successful in teaching listening, they should speak to their students at a level which is more or less appropriate to all students. Teachers’ voice

inside the classroom should be very clear to be heard by every individual student because the teacher's voice may affect students' attitude towards the subject they do. According to this Harmer (2007:36) states that "How we speak and what our voice sounds like have a crucial impact on classes".

Harmer (2007:135-6) pointed to six listening principles in teaching:

Principle 1: Encourage students to listen as often and as much as possible.

The more students listen, the better they get at listening-and the better they get at understanding pronunciation and at using it appropriately themselves.

Principle 2: Help students prepare to listen.

Students need to be made ready to listen. This means that they will need to look at pictures discuss the topic, or read the questions first. In order to be in a position to predict what is coming and engage with the topic to really want to listen.

Principle 3: Once may not be enough.

There are almost no occasions when the teacher will play an audio track only once. Students will want to hear it again in order to pick up the missed things from the first time. This may push teachers to give a chance to the students to repeat and encouraged them to ask for clarification when they need it. The first listening to a text is often used to give students ideas of what the speakers sound like and what the general topic is about.

Principle 4: Encourage students to respond to the content of a listening, not just to the language.

The listening sequence is an important part for the teacher s to draw out the meaning of what is being said, discern what is intended and find out what impression it makes on the students. It is also important to say that any listening material is useful for studying language use a range of pronunciation issues.

Principle 5: Different listening stages demand different listening tasks.

There are different things that teachers want to do with a listening text, they need to set different tasks for different listening stages. This means that, for the first listening, the task may need to be fairly straightforward and general. Later listening may focus in on detailed information, language use or pronunciation, etc. this will be the teacher's job to help students focus in on what they are listening for.



Principle 6: Good teachers exploit listening texts to the full.

If the teachers ask students to invest time and emotional energy in a listening text- and if they themselves have spent time choosing and preparing the listening sequence- then it makes sense to use the audio track or live listening experience for as many different applications as possible. Thus, after an initial listening, the teacher can play a track again for various kinds of study before using the subject matter, situation or audioscript for a new activity. This listening then becomes an important event in a teaching sequence rather than just an exercise by itself.

Suggestions

- Students need to be able to listen to a variety of things in a number of different ways.
- They need to be able to listen for specific information such as times, platform numbers, etc.
- Students should listen as much as possible as Harmer (2007:135) says, “the more students listen, the better they get at listening...and the better they get at understanding pronunciation and at using it appropriately themselves”.
- Students may be encouraged to listen for pleasure in the foreign target language on CD or MP3 players or cassettes when they are out the classroom.
- Students should be encouraged to respond to the content of the listening; not just the language, different listening tasks, good teachers exploit listening tasks to the full.
- Teachers may break the audio track into manageable chunks which this may help students who to understand the content of the part of it before moving on to the next ones. By doing this, students may make listening less stressful.
- It is important to advise teachers to start with simple listening tasks in a variety of methods.
- Teachers should have to decide what type of material their student should listen such as authentic or not. Authentic speech is speech not spoken just for language learners but it is language spoken for native or

competent learners of English, with no concessions to made for the learner.

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