

## DEVELOPING SPEAKING LISTENING SKILLS

*Как и в любом другом языке, так и английском языке используются различные методы обучения. Рассматриваются технологии, как совокупность приемов и методы обучения иностранному языку и их реализации на практике. Групповые методы обучения предполагают разработку замысла, идеи и детальное планирование каждого урока. При этом имеется в виду разработка не только главной идеи, но и условий ее реализации.*

Introduction. Listening is an important language skill and yet the most neglected skill in our classroom. It is neglected not because we do not recognize the importance of listening but because we take it for granted that learners automatically acquire this skill without any special training. We think we give them enough practice in listening in our classroom through our expository methods of teaching. But we are afraid the matter is not as simple as it appears to be. Listening involves a lot many things. In this unit, we will introduce you to different aspects of listening. After studying this unit, you should be able to answer the following questions

What is listening?

Listening is an active process. It can be depicted as follows.

Input\_\_\_\_\_> Processing\_\_\_\_\_>Output

By input we mean the words spoken by the speaker and by output the listener's response. The listener processes the input before coming out with his/her output. Now, what happens during the processing stage?

The Input could be processed in the following ways.

- a) Bottom up processing
- b) Top down processing

In the bottom up processing, the listener depends solely on the incoming input for the meaning of the message. The input is received and analyzed at different levels of organization. The sound signals are organized into words; the words into phrases; phrases into clauses; and the clauses into a whole sentence. In bottom up processing, listeners use their lexical and grammatical competence in the language for getting the intended meaning of the message.

In top down processing, listeners rely on their background knowledge for understanding the message. So, input is not the source of meaning. Listeners through their knowledge of the world make guesses of the intended meaning of the message and approach the input to confirm them and fill out the specific details.

However, good listeners know when to use which type of processing. And the choice usually depends on the listeners purposes of listening. Their familiarity with the topic and their background knowledge.

A chief is describing a recipe on the radio. An expert cook and a trainee cook are listening to the radio chief. What processing strategies might they employ in their listening?

The expert cook's purpose of listening is different from the trainee cook's. Whereas the former wants to compare and contrast his recipe with that of the radio chief, the trainee cook, because he does not know much about cooking, has to pay greater attention and learn the different stages involved in the recipe. So, the expert cook might use top down processing most of the time and the trainee bottom up processing.

Let us take an utterance from a conversation and look at the process which we go through before we understand its intended meaning.

Input: Hari is fond of sweets

The input is first organized into words.

Hari / is / fond /of / sweets

Then it is organized into sense groups.

Hari / is fond of / sweets

Our knowledge of grammar helps us in this process.

With the help of our mental dictionary, we arrive at the propositional meaning of the utterance. The propositional meaning attributes a certain quality to Hari. Until now we have used bottom up strategies.

We may, on the other hand, use a top down strategy. An utterance can have many meaning depending on the context in which it is used. And usually we get the clue to the intended meaning when we look at the utterance which precedes or follows it.

With the help of the underlined utterance we can infer that the speaker is not attributing a quality to Hari, but is offering an explanation for Hari's obesity. But we can arrive at this conclusion only when we know that eating too many sweets can lead obesity. Without this background knowledge we tend to think that these two sentences are not related.

The tone of the speaker also helps us in understanding the meaning. It tells us about the attitude of the speaker. We can know from the tone whether s\he approves or not.

Discourse markers and cohesive devices also help us in interpreting the message. Listeners can also know the attitude of the speaker to preceding and subsequent propositions with the help of proposition markers such as of course really and establish continuity between one utterance and another with the help of discourse markers such as actually well anyway and now. We can also use cues such as 'talking about that', 'reminds you of', 'by the way', to identify directions in topic development.

So, the following process is involved in comprehension.

1. The type of interactions act or speech event in which the listener is involved is determined
2. Scripts relevant to the particular situations are recalled.
3. The goals of the speaker are inferred through reference to the situation, the script, and the sequential position of the utterance.
4. The propositional meaning of the utterance is determined
5. An illocutionary meaning is assigned to the message.
6. This information is retained and upon, and the form in which it was originally received is deleted.

Types of listening. Adrian Doff talks about the following two types of listening.

1 *Casual listening*: Many times we listen to someone or something without any particular purpose. At such times, we often do not listen to them with much concentration, unless we hear something which interests us. This type of listening is often found in social contexts when we interact with others.

2 *Focused listening*: It is 'intensive listening' for information or for transacting business. The listener is attentive and concentrates on what the speaker is saying.

You can begin by asking them questions regarding the games\sport they are interested in; how often they take part in any competitions.

Then you can ask them hypothetical questions like what they would do if a group of small children came in their way all of a sudden, when they were on the verge of winning a running race? This can be followed by a discussion as to what is the right thing to do for a person caught in such a situation. Should we push the children away and stride down the finishing line or slow down and let the children pass unhurt and the process be ready to lose the race? You can then round off the discussion by asking them a question, "Can you imagine, a person was willing to sacrifice his gold medal in the Olympic games (tell them about the games if you think they don't know about these games) for the sake of saving a brood of ducklings?"

The learners' curiosity would have been aroused by now and they would be eager to know who this person was. In which race was he taking part? And what had the ducklings to do with

that race?

At this point, you could tell the learners, that you will read the passage aloud/play the cassette and they should find out the answers to the questions they have raised. The activities till this stage are called pre-listening activities.

In order to facilitate their listening further, you could give them a set of questions before you start reading out the passage. These questions should be global in nature and should help the learners in getting an overview of the passage. The learners listen to the text and answer the global questions. Then you can give another set of questions meant for detailed understanding and make them listen to the text again. The learners answer the second set of questions too. If the learners want, you can read the text out a third time. Make sure that the learners answer all your questions.

However, you have to remember that learners will not have enough time for making detailed notes while listening. So, it is better if you could provide the learners with the appropriate answer when multiple choice questions are given or say whether the given statement is true or false. These activities which the learners do while listening to the text are known as while-listening activities.

You can then ask the learners to read the passage and correct their answers themselves. Afterwards, you can ask them to write a letter to a friend advising him/her to read the beautiful story of Bobby Pearce. Or you can ask them to give their views on Bobby Pearce. These activities are known as post listening activities.

You might have noted how, during this lesson, we gave our learners practice in the other language skills in addition to listening. First we made them speak, then listen to the passage, read the passage and finally write a letter. It is because in real life we never use a language skill in isolation; let's take an example of a cricket match between India and the West Indies. Before the match, we discuss the strengths and weaknesses of each team and its chances of winning. During the match, we listen to the commentary and after the match we read about it in the newspapers and sometimes we write letters to the editor giving our views on the match.

*Story-based method.* A teacher can think of many other ways of teaching listening. She can come out with his/her own listening activities if the textbook doesn't have enough of them.

For example, teacher can tell the learners a story, real or imaginary, and pause frequently while narrating the story, and ask them to guess what is going to happen next

A few nights ago, I was asleep at home as usual. At about three o'clock in the morning....(what happened?)..... I was suddenly awakened by a noise ..... (what noise?)..... of running water....(what was it?). It came from the bathroom, so I got up and went to investigate (what was it?). I found, to my dismay, that the cold water pipe had burst and water was pouring all over the floor .... (so what did I do?) So I got a bucket and put it underneath..... (what should I have done?) then I realized what I should have done. I went out into the hall and turned off the main tap.

When we listen to a story, we want to know what happens next. So, the use of these questions is natural. However, the teacher should see that all the learners take part in the discussions. She should try to get as many answers as possible. This technique will help the learners in developing their ability to predict, which an important sub-skill of listening is.

*Task-based teaching.* Task-based teaching has come into vogue in the last decade. In this method, learners have to listen to the speaker and carry out the tasks given by the speaker. For example, they listen to the text and fill in a table /label diagram/list the main points. Successful performance of these tasks shows that learners have comprehended the message. Learners feel motivated to do these tasks because they resemble natural language use.

*Summary.* In this article, we have discussed what listening is, what its sub-skills are and how we can help our learners develop listening skills

*Developing speaking skills. Introduction.* Right from your childhood days you have been listening to speakers of various kinds. You have heard stores, lectures and discussions. Although we communicate every day in a hundred and one different ways, why is it that we remember

some stories and some discussions and forget others? It is because some people can do it better than others? It seems as though some have acquired the art of conversational skills naturally, by listening to others, through exposure; and some have developed it through practice and perseverance.

In this unit, we shall briefly discuss these two perspectives to the development of speaking skills. On one hand, the development of speaking is seen as a form of skill-learning, in which the items to be learnt are isolated and presented separately to the students, who have to practice them in order to master them. In the terminology of language teaching this is a movement from the presentation stage to the practice stage or pre-communicative activity. All teachers, we also have to create opportunities for our learners to integrate all the parts and move from the stage of accuracy to the stage of fluency. In language teaching this is the stage of production, communicative activity or skill-using. Through all these stages, the students internalize the language system and try to speak fluently and correctly.

We get the contrasting perspective, where language learning is special development of oral communication skills in real-life situations, is seen as a form of natural growth. This perspective derives from watching how children learn their mother tongue and how some people learn a second language naturally, as a result of being exposed to it in various contexts.

Both of these kinds of learning take place in the real world and so both accounts may be acceptable. In trying to take our classroom learning more efficient, it seems sensible to use all the learning capacities that people possess and, therefore, to try to exploit both of their skill-learning and their natural-learning capacities. How the two kinds of learning might be integrated into one framework, which can then form the basis for our methodology. As mentioned in the introduction to the block, although we do teach the skills of language in an integrated way, the awareness of what the skills and sub-skills of language are is essential for effective teaching. This is more conspicuous in the case of speaking because of its centrality in the case of any language. A mother feels delighted when she hears the first utterance of her child. Natural language acquisition of one's own mother tongue seems to be an automatic and easy phenomenon. But when speech is formally taught in the case of a second language, it seems more difficult. Even when it is not formally taught, it is often difficult for us to speak another language effectively or confidently.

In the literature of language learning there are discussions of such problems and solutions. Here are three examples:

1. "They often think of the verb-ending or word-order while they are uttering a sentence... This makes their performance halting and wearisome to listen to. It also reduces their ability to respond quickly in conversation and to adapt to changing circumstances.

2. While doing their group-work, a learner may feel the need to express his/her opinion, but as s/he does not have the language to express it s/he may just withdraw.

3. Communication can be done by means of gestures, paraphrase or any other communication strategies which foreigners have been observed to use and which are sometimes taught explicitly.

In a multilingual society like India, two or more language plans may become mixed, leading to code-switching, code-mixing, transfer or so-called interference errors. For example, while giving directions to strangers or to one another, the learners might say "maidan" or "pucca road" or "kachcha road". As teachers, we have to make our learners aware of the contexts where such expressions are acceptable and where they aren't. A learner may have a large number of individual structures in his or her repertoire. However, s/he may not have had the opportunity to select and adapt the structures appropriately to particular communicative purposes as these arise during interaction. As a result, for example s/he may not have developed sufficient flexibility to take elements from "I should see ..." and "I have seen".... and create "I should have seen".

The ability to retrieve structures in response to higher level demands and to adapt utterances to suit immediate needs can only be developed through an integrated practice in real-

life situations , in which learners are required to move through all the stages of production outlined by Garrett -from conceptual planning to the actual articulation of speech.

What is speaking? Effective communication through speaking takes place when all aspects of a language have been integrated into a single utterance.

While doing this activity you might have noticed that some sub-skills of speaking are common both inside the classroom and outside the classroom.

#### Literature

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