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THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN USING TRADITIONAL AND INTERACTIVE METHODS IN DEVELOPING LISTENING SKILLS IN ENGLISH FOR NON-LANGUAGE STUDENTS

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Abstract

English communicative competence is one of the prime preferences for learners in this current century, including tourism academy students. Communication occurs as long as people receive and send messages which require good listening and speaking skills. Listeners listen, understand and respond in a communication process; therefore without understanding the speaker, learners fail to convey messages. Listening comprehension provides learners meaningful input to enhance their linguistic knowledge. This study investigated the role of listening comprehension in development of communicative competence and found that learners developed high communicative competence by language input provided by listening to language materials.

Keywords: communicative competence, listening comprehension, hindering factors, micro-macro component, tourism academy students.

INTRODUCTION

Teaching listening skills was ignored until the 1960s but it has recently gained importance. It was thought that learners could develop their listening comprehension skills while learning grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation. Over the last two decades due to increasing significance of communicative competence, the role of listening skills has been highlighted. In particular, from 1980s to 1990s, listening skills became popular in foreign language learning. Yet the role of listening in communication establishment cannot be underestimated, therefore sufficient amount of attention should be given to the development of listening comprehension [1].



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MATERIALS AND METHODS

It was known that the major component in foreign language learning was communicative competence. In other words, when learners had good communication skills, they were considered as effective users of the language, yet Dunkel, Henning, and Chaudron state that listening skills is more important than speaking skills because without understanding speaker's message, the listener cannot respond thus communication between them cannot be established. In a study carried out by Feyten it was found that 70 % of a working day is spent on verbal communication and 45 % of this amount is spent on listening. Underwood states that in a listening process listeners pay attention to speakers and tries to understand what they say therefore listening and speaking skills should be integrated to develop oral communicative competence of learners. In real life these two skills are in integration, therefore real success in language teaching and learning occurs when learners use it skillfully and efficiently both inside and outside the classroom [2].

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Foreign language learners need language input to improve their level of proficiency. Listening can provide learners the input they need. When listeners listen to listening texts, in particular to native speakers, their listening proficiency will enhance and they will stand a better chance of using the language effectively. In order to have a good mastery of listening comprehension, learners listening materials are fundamental in the language learning process [4].

Learners in a listening process should focus on messages to decode them. This requires concentration, linguistic knowledge, background knowledge, competence and skill to construct meaning. Therefore listening is an active process. Underwood points out that aural process has three stages [5]:

- In the first stage learners structure what they hear or listen to into meaningful forms. Background information about the topic help learners make correct predictions and have better comprehension.
- Learners in the second stage work on the information they receive through listening. This stage requires learners to have linguistic competence. Along with the previous knowledge learners will try to decode the information accurately.
- In the third stage learners transmit the information into their long term memory so that they could retrieve whenever they need later.



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During communication people receive and send messages. This process requires learners to have good listening and speaking skills. But without comprehending the speaker's message, an accurate response cannot be given hence the impact of listening skills on speaking skills is indispensable. Learners listen, understand, and respond so that they can establish communication. Listening skills will enable learners to communicate with other people. Listening plays a key role in communication and foreign language learning. It should be borne in mind that without understanding the speakers' message learners are not able to respond appropriately for that reason listening at the same time facilitates the other skills. Simply put, listening influences the development of other language skills. When learners obtain input, they are involved in language activities. This engagement will allow learners to learn the target language. Rubin, Dunkel, Anderson and Lynch claim that listening provides the most important component for communication. Oxford advocates the same idea and states that 'listening is perhaps the most fundamental language skill'.

McKeating suggests that learners pass through some processes in constructing the meaning of a message [4];

- Perception
- Decoding
- Prediction and selection

In the perception process, learners identify the speech sounds. Linguistic and non-linguistic resources contribute to construction of meaning and learners are able to change speech into meaningful words. Decoding occurs when learners try to make sense of messages through chunks. These chunks after becoming meaningful for the learners are kept in short term memory. Later on, they are kept in long term memory. Learners might not understand all words in a message but prediction helps learners to understand accurately without knowing all words. When language elements are predictable learners can easily process them. Oller's term 'expectancy' indicates that learners capacity to predict has a key role in listening comprehension. Under normal circumstances it is very difficult to listen to a speech and answer some questions related to it but predicting cues will allow learners to interpret the content of speech.



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CONCLUSION

In the last ten years much of the attention has been devoted to listening comprehension development in foreign language teaching and learning. To make sense of the incoming information, listening comprehension ability of the learners is of prime concern. Language learners interact in spoken communication through interpreting the aural input provided by listening.

Learners during listening process acquire correct pronunciation of words, how to use words and structures accurately in a sentence. Listening helps learners decode linguistic knowledge and utilize it for successful communication. In other words, comprehensible input through listening leads to comprehensible output in the target language. Although this research conducted at tourism department students but this result can be used by other English teachers (speaking lecturers) in some departments to classify the students' weaknesses of knowledge of language for both micro and macro then become top priority to be solved and handle the factors that hamper students' communicative competence by creating a less threatening classroom atmosphere, employ appropriate techniques and strategies, media, assessment, motivate to speak English and strengthen student's confidence and efficacy.

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