

Using Authentic Texts in Teaching Listening

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ABSTRACT: Learning foreign languages is one of the most important issues today. That is why a lot of attention is paid to the study of English in our country. Learning English, and the process of learning a second language in general, can usually take place by combining four continuous skills. One of them and the most important at the moment is the listening skill. In this article, the author discusses in detail the importance of listening in language learning and using authentic texts in teaching listening.

KEYWORD: foreign language, English, skill, listening, mental potential, audio texts, communication, etc.

In the methodology of teaching foreign languages, it is believed that an important condition for the formation of listening skills is motivation. If the listener feels the need to listen, this leads to the maximum mobilization of his mental potential. Speech hearing is aggravated, attention becomes more focused, and the intensity of thought processes increases. "In order to create motivation for learning foreign languages and, in particular, the need for listening as a knowledge of the new about the language and the world, as an active participation in communication, the choice of audio texts is important", said one of the professional teachers¹ of Yale university in USA.

The authentic text reflects the facts and features of the national culture. Through the text, students acquire new knowledge, values, native speakers of the language being studied, i.e. cultural competence is formed. The reflection in the texts of living real life arouses the interest of students, the willingness to discuss the material, to enter into a discussion. Explanation of this kind of information contained in the text is an effective means of attracting students' attention to reality, contributes to the formation of linguistic and regional and intercultural competence, makes it possible to compare and find different and common in realities, positively affects the personal-emotional state of students, provides the ability to simultaneously address the language and culture. Some stable phrase logical and non-phrase logical phrases, aphorisms and paraphrases also require a linguistic and cultural commentary². In addition, authentic texts are characterized by a lively intonation of colloquial speech, natural emotionality, and pause fillers - characteristic features of natural informal communication. At the same time, authentic material carries certain difficulties that need to be overcome, for example, the complexity of the language material. For authentic colloquial speech, reticence, elasticity, and the use of abbreviated forms are natural. At the same time, the signs of authenticity of regional studies and scientific and cultural texts are the strict logical relationship of

¹ Boxer, D. and Cohen, A. 2004, Studying Speaking to Inform Second Language learning, New York: Clevedon.

² Anderson, K. 2004, Study Speaking, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

individual parts, the sequence of presentation, the expansion of the statement, the presence of terms and proper names. An authentic text, like no educational text, is distinguished by its redundancy. In both cases, this is material that has not been processed and adapted by the teacher-methodologist.

Authentic materials provide real-life examples of language used in everyday situations. They can be used to add more interest for the learner. They can serve as a reminder to learners that there is an entire population who use the target language in their everyday lives. Authentic materials can provide information about the target culture and provide that culture's perspective on an issue or event. The rich language found in authentic materials provides a source of input language learners need for acquisition. The use of authentic materials in teaching English as a foreign or second language, especially in teaching listening, has become a popular issue in recent years. This is due to the concern that teaching listening should have a connection to the real listening-life³. Furthermore, the edited materials that are proposed for teaching listening skills in the classroom do not or less present the real situation of the language. For example, when learners listen to a recorded listening material, the speech used is more formal which is not portray what commonly appears in an ordinary conversation as it is attended for laboratory practices only. Porter and Roberts point out that language hints such as hesitation, 'normal attention signals (mm and uhuh's)' and informal words are often found in actual speaking. However, in an edited listening, these features are missing.

Although there are two contradictory opinions about the effectiveness of using authentic materials for teaching listening skills in the classroom, researchers agree that these texts should be presented with proper strategies and approaches. Furthermore, the level of learners should also be taken as consideration in order to take full advantage of the materials. Listening skills have not been given a serious attention as much as reading, writing, and speaking in English language teaching for a long time. Comparing to other language skills, listening is perceived as the most frequent activity we do when we communicate. For instance, in teaching learning process, most students tend to activate their listening skill rather than their speaking, while reading and writing take the least interest. Approximately, we spend more than forty percent on this skill on our daily life. Because of its common use, it seemed that there was no deep discussion needed, and the study of listening skills was likely less interesting for researchers. In addition, this condition was not only influenced by researchers but also policy makers who design the curriculum of the language teaching study that studying listening is limited. Both institutions tended to give less concern with this skill and gave more focus on speaking which was considered more important subject to be taught in teaching language than listening. As a result, the number of studies in listening was quite small⁴. Nowadays, however, there is a significant awareness of the important of listening skill. There is also an increase in listening publication. Because of 'a significant debate about its validity', researchers now pay more attention to the crucial of listening comprehension toward the successful of teaching language learning. Even though this skill is often regarded as a passive skill, it is obviously not a simple activity. It involves cognitive aspects. It is also a difficult process and needs a serious study. As Vandergrift⁵ emphasizes that listening is a complicated skill and demands more intentional study. For example, when learners are listening, they have more than one activity to be master and activate. This skill entails the ability to recognize and differentiate sounds, understand the meaning and

³ Flowerdew, J. and Miller, L. 2005, *Second Language Listening: Theory and Practice*, London: London University Press

⁴ Бабайлова, А.Э. Текст как продукт, средство и объект коммуникации при обучении народному языку / А.Э.Бабайлова // – Саратов: Изд-во Сарат. ун-та, 1987. – 152 с..

⁵ Larry Vandergrift, *Teaching and Learning Second Language Listening (ESL & Applied Linguistics Professional Series)*. – LA.,2021

grammatical rules, and other language competence. It also needs a good coordination between hearing and thinking.

Based on the study, this condition is often experienced by students of foreign language. Listening activity especially using authentic materials is more difficult and complex because they not only have to understand language but also cultural context that they are not familiar. They have to activate both cognitive aspects and cultural awareness. Ridgway, points out that listening is a difficult task for foreign learners, thus requires serious study. Because of this fact, learners are necessary to overcome and compensate their difficulty in understanding listening tasks with training their abilities. However, the definition of strategy itself is still ambiguous among researchers. They still argue whether strategies are conscious or unconscious. This is because the differences between those are not obvious. Even though there is no definite explanation about strategy, Ridgway⁶ suggests that teachers have to focus on the training of conscious.

The use of authentic listening materials in teaching listening has been embraced by many instructors and learners in contemporary society. This is given the many advantages that this form of learning has over the use of scripted materials. For example, the materials expose the learner to the real world, they reflect the changes in the world and they are more relevant to the learners. However, there are several disadvantages that make the use of this technique unattractive. This includes the irrelevancy of some of the items in the materials and the exorbitant costs that are incurred in accessing these materials by the learners and the instructors in some cases. However, when all the factors are considered, it appears that the use of authentic materials in teaching listening is more beneficial than it is costly.

Authentic listening materials are likely now regarded as one of the resources of teaching listening skills for EFL and ESL. Most researchers and teachers agree that these texts can give benefit to teaching listening skills. However, some authors still argue about the effectiveness of these texts. Because this listening texts employ a real oral communication in which have different characteristics to recorded listening, it tends to give constraints to learners in listening comprehension. The speed of speech, the use of colloquial words, hesitations, false starts, and empty pauses are some examples of the features of authentic materials. Therefore, these kinds of materials sometimes are not appropriate for all level of learners. For example, for beginner level, listening to authentic materials can be very difficult for them to cope with. On the other hand, for other researchers, these features can give benefit to learners because of their authenticity. Regarding to their advantages, authentic listening materials play an important role in developing appropriate and effective listening skills of the learners because of their authenticity⁷. In addition, authentic materials can give advantages to both learners and teachers. For learners, these materials can give experience of a real context of the target language. They will be introduced how a conversation in a natural situation of native speakers occur. Furthermore, the most important advantage of these texts is that they can motivate learners in learning language especially listening. Because of their interesting features, authentic materials are likely can attract learners to have further learning of listening autonomously. This means that these texts can give a meaningful learning. For teachers, these texts offer a wide range of listening materials. They can also give a challenge to teachers to design a good listening material for students.

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⁶ Selma Ridgway, Education and teaching. – T., 2018

⁷ Колесникова, Е.А. Обучение аудированию с письменной фиксацией существенной информации студентов первого курса языкового педагогического вуза (английский язык): Дис. ... канд. пед. наук / Е.А.Колесникова. - М., 2009

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