

# Significance of Listening Skills in Enhancing the Communication Skills

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## Abstract

Grasping of any kind of information relies on learners' capability of listening. Listening plays a significant role in regular communication and academic success. Students get succeeded in enhancing the communication skills, if they can understand the listening skills. Though listening is an important skill, it has been ignored in second language acquisition, research, teaching, and assessment. This study focuses at probing the significance of listening skills in enhancing the communication skills. It is possible for the learners to gain good communication skills, if they are strong in listening skills. It is observed that practicing of listening skills like; listening to music, watching English movies, attending English language courses develops the listening skills of the students. This study shows how Computer Assisted Language Learning helps in improving the listening skills of the students. If students acquire the listening skills, they can develop the communication skills.

**Keywords:** Listening Skill, Enhancement, Communication Skills, Language

## **Introduction**

Listening is an important skill in improving the communicational skills. Unless the content is listened and understood thoroughly, the learners cannot communicate properly. Effective listening needs a strong mind to understand the context. Learning of language is an overriding part in academics and social life. Many studies show that listening plays a crucial role in developing the communication skills. For the development of complete personality of a learner, language learning is vital and it is well known that English language introduces the world to the learners. Some studies show that among LSRW skills of English, the learners spend 45-55% time on practicing the listening skills. Though the listening plays a vital role in enhancing the communication skills, the teachers ignore the listening skill and it is not taught properly in many educational institutions (Mendelsohn, 1994, p. 9). These days, listening has been considered as more significant in both EFL classroom and SLA research.

A typical study points out that many of us spend 70 to 80 percent of our working hours in some form of communication. Of that time, 9 percent of time is spent on writing, 16 percent of time is spent on reading and remaining 45 percent of time is spent on listening. By the study it is understood that the listening can help us in grasping and understanding the information spoken by the speaker, enriching personal relations and increasing the learning ability. A person, who has the knowledge of English language, gains a respected position in the society. If a person has command over the English language, he/she will be with the flow of global knowledge. Considering the importance of this, English was made a necessary subject in the curriculum. It is taught with an aim to make the learners efficient to communicate and to learn four language skills.

When we talk about the listening skills, it is very essential for us to know the difference between listening and hearing. Many learners feel that both hearing and listening are the same. Hearing is the process of listening without concentration whereas listening is the process of listening with

concentration. So, the learners should maintain the listening process when they go for listening comprehension. When the teachers teach the listening skills to the learners, they need to let the learners know the difference between hearing and listening so that the learners ignore the process of hearing.

In the Secondary Education Commission (1952), NPE (1986), NCF (2005) and NPE (2020), it is declared that English shall be taught in the light of its national and international importance and to encourage the learners to gain the skills.

### **Definition of listening:**

According to Anderson and Lynch (1988), listening is not something the listeners can understand what the speaker delivers. Listening is the process in which the listeners play an important role in grasping the knowledge and understanding the inner meaning of the context (p.6). Underwood (1989) defined that listening is the process of trying to grab the meaning of the context that the listeners hear (p. 1). Mendelsohn (1994) describes that listening is the capability to grasp the language spoken by the speakers. O'Malley, Chamot, and Kupper (1989) defines that listening is a mindful procedure of understanding the contextual meaning using the signs and previous knowledge (p.19).

### **Types of listening:**

- **Casual listening:** This type of listening involves when we listen without any purpose. In this type of listening, the listeners do not have any seriousness. Listening to music, listening to stories etc. will come under casual listening.
- **Focused listening:** this is a type of listening in which the listeners maintain the seriousness in grasping the information. This is a purposeful listening. It includes listening to lectures, listening to any serious information.
- **Appreciative listening:** In this type, the listener listens to accept and appreciate what

is said by the speaker. Appreciative listening is often done when listening to music with only the intent to enjoy the sounds that hear.

- **Gist listening:** This is a type of listening in which the listener listens to the important points.

#### **Present situation of listening and communication skills:**

It is observed that learners still struggle to gain the basic skills of listening and communication. As other languages, English is never considered teaching as a skill but only as a subject in schools and colleges (Himangani, 2017) and the focus is on syllabus completion and not on skill enhancement. In India, English is as a second language and it is taught as a language without much importance. The teaching of English in India aims at enabling the learners to read, write and listen to English with enough abilities in comprehension and to communicate in English with clarity, precision and appropriateness (Lakshmi, 2017). So, the teaching of English should make the learners understand how the listening skills are essential in developing the communication skills.

It is also perceived that the teachers focus more on enhancing the reading and writing skills rather than listening and speaking skills. According to studies, it is identified that most of the teachers do not have knowledge of teaching the listening skills and the required equipment is also not available in schools and colleges to teach the listening skills. As the writing and reading skills are given more importance in examinations, the learners focus more on writing and reading skills without focusing on listening and speaking skills as they are not given priority in examination part.

#### **Review of related literature:**

From the collected information, it is identified that several researchers came forward to find out more ways of improving the listening skills. This is the review which is the

collection of 25 researchers from India and 15 researchers from other countries. Many researchers have proved that the listening is an essential skill in improving the communication skills. It is identified by many investigators that listening makes the learners improve the maturity of thinking. This review was expanded by concentrating on the aspects given below:

- i. Difficulties in acquiring listening and communication skills in English
- ii. Improving the listening and speaking skills in English
- iii. Understanding the vocabulary
- iv. Usage of ICT for improving the listening and communication skills
- v. Problems of the learners in understanding the accent

#### **Barriers to listening:**

It is observed that most of the learners are not properly taught how to practice the listening skills. The learners are taught how to read, write and speak but they are not taught how to listen. Though many training programmes are conducted to teach the listening skills, the learners are unable to overcome the problems which they get in listening skills. The following are some of the barriers to a good listening:

- Speaking continuously without listening to people
- Various types of obstructions and disturbances
- Careless attention when listening
- Lack of understanding ability
- Distraction in the middle of the talk

#### **Tips to develop effective listening skills:**

The following are the tips which are to be followed by the learners in listening

comprehension to grasp and understand the information delivered by the speaker. While listening, the learners need to:

- Have proper eye contact with speaker so that the learner can understand the intension of the speaker.
- Be open accept the new ideas and information.
- Understand the vocabulary and the meanings of the words.
- Clarify the doubts asking the speaker.
- Note down the important points.
- Maintain the silence while listening.

**Conclusion:**

As observed, the listening is a significant aspect of communication skills. Listening develops the communication skills and its quality. Listening helps the learners in making better decision in all aspects. As listening plays a vital role in enhancing the communication skills, the learners need to focus more on the listening skills and need to follow proper way of practicing the listening skills. It is suggested that the teachers need to proper preparation in listening skills to train the learners effectively in listening skills. The learners need to have the ability of understanding the vocabulary and the accent of the speaker so that they can grasp the information. It is understood that if the listeners concentrates more on listening skills, they will become successful in communication skills. It is more significant for the teacher to facilitate several opportunities for learners to practice listening skills and to become actively engaged in the listening process.

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