ICT IN LISTENING AS A LANGUAGE SKILL

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ABSTRACT

The importance of listening to language acquisition is emphasized, and listening is presented as a language ability which requires a serious attention. The active listening process is broken down into its component parts, with special attention paid to the distinction between hearing and listening. The percentage of listening time compared to other language skills is analysed to support the fact that listening deserves better attention than it currently receives. Most proficiency examinations tests listening as a distinct language skill so there is a need to equip language learners with the skills required to handle such examinations. To help learners improve on their listening skills, some digital tools are recommended. Some suggestions are provided on what teachers can do in the class to help their learners do better in their listening ability..

KEYWORDS: *listening process, listening skill, hearing, Listening comprehension, listening tools*

WHAT IS LISTENING?

The ability to listen attentively and analyse information in order to draw conclusions about the content of a message is known as active listening. The act of listening entails not only the reception of a message but also its interpretation and subsequent response. Listening is a discipline that, like any other form of communication, requires deliberate practise. To listen is to make an attempt to understand what is being said, both verbally and nonverbally, to remember what has been heard and to act accordingly. (Bowen 2019)

Listening is thought of as a multi-step process in which listeners actively participate in activities like sound discrimination, word recognition, and grammatical structure comprehension. (Vandergrift, 1999). Hearing is the sense through which words is received. To listen is to recognise the sounds of conversation and convert them into understandable language. It is the ability to receive and correctly understand messages in the communication process that is referred to as "listening," and it is accomplished by using one's ears to pick up on individual sounds (letters, stress, rhythm, and pauses).

Effective dialogue relies on attentive listening. Misunderstandings occur frequently when people lack the ability to observe attentively. Because of this, it's easy for the sender to become frustrated or irritated, and dialogue breaks down. In this context, "hearing" means the ability to perceive and process auditory information. It's a physiological thing that occurs mechanically if your ears are working properly. But listening takes more than that; it demands attention and effort, not just in the mind but also in the body. As a listener, you should focus on the speaker's tone of voice, body language, and the specifics of the tale being told. In other words, it entails paying attention to both spoken and unspoken communication. How well you hear and comprehend these messages will determine how well you can communicate with others. Understanding the distinction between hearing and listening is crucial for developing and passing on listening skills. Some of the differences include the following:

Differences Between hearing and listening.

Hearing	Listening
Hearing is the reception of sound	listening is the attachment of meaning to the sound.
Hearing is passive	listening is active
Hearing is a form of perception	Listening is an active and intentional process

The distinction between hearing and listening, according to Rost, lies in one's level of intent. (2002). Listening comes before speaking, reading comes before writing, and writing comes after speaking. As a result, listening is the primary linguistic ability developed almost immediately after birth.

In addition, studies indicate that people spend an average of 45% of their time listening, while only 30% of their time is spent speaking, 16% reading, and 9% writing. (Adler, R. et al. 2001). That's a lot of time to listen to something, by any measure. Therefore, investing some additional effort into honing your listening skills is beneficial.
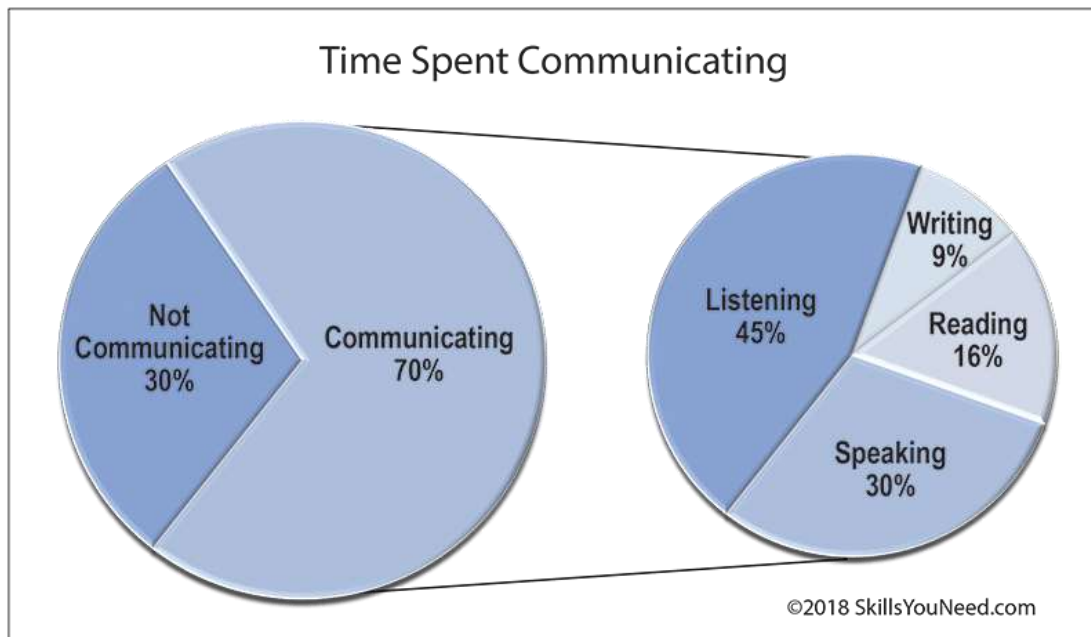
Research by Adler, R; Rosenfeld, L; and Proctor, R served as the basis for the following diagram. (2001). Harcourt, Fort Worth, TX: Eighth Edition Interplay: The Process of Interpersonal Communication.

Approaches to teaching and acquiring a second or foreign language have varied in how they treat listening. Krashen (1982) argued that learning is impossible without an adequate amount of "comprehensible input," and he suggested that teachers give their students frequent opportunities to listen to audio as part of their lesson plans. According to Saha (2009), the act of hearing is a free choice. That means the receiver of the speaker's message has to make an active attempt to do so.

Language proficiency can be boosted by listening to native speakers. Listening is the only way to fully adjust to the timbre, rhythm, intonation, and stress of a language. Listening attentively is essential for picking up on subtleties in any language. The above diagram illustrates the importance of listening as the first step in constructing a thoughtful answer. It is only through listening that we are able to acquire pronunciation, word stress, vocabulary, and syntax, and it is also through listening that we are able to comprehend messages conveyed based solely on tone of voice, pitch, and accent. Learning is impossible without proper interpretation of information.

The Active Listening Process
Active listening involves processing what is heard, evaluating it, and then responding to it. There are five phases of listening: reception, comprehension, evaluation, retention, and reaction. In order to be effective as a listener, one must be able to detect and name the speech sounds directed towards them, comprehend the meaning of those sounds, evaluate or assess the message, retain the information learned, and react (verbally or nonverbally).

STAGES OF ACTIVE LISTENING PROCESS

Bennetch, et al (2018)

Source- Openpress.usacks.ca

The Receiving Stage

The first step in listening is getting, which entails actively listening and paying attention. The act of hearing consists of the eardrum's physiological response to sound vibrations. It goes without saying that we need to be able to perceive what we are listening to in order to gather information through listening. We will have trouble listening if our hearing is impaired.

The other part of the receiving process is attending, which is where the actual listening takes place. When we pay attention, we actively listen for and correctly recognise individual sounds as words. Until we assign meaning to the sounds we perceive, they have none. Active listening involves constructing meaning from linguistic and nonlinguistic cues.

The ability to recognise individual human voices, or "speech segmentation," is also helpful for participation. It would be a failing of listening to recognise sounds as speech but then fail to deconstruct those sounds into sentences and words.

The Understanding Stage

In the comprehending phase, the listener engages in a process called decoding to make sense of what they've heard. When the listener's interpretation of the words and their context agrees with the speaker's intention, there is mutual understanding. To better grasp a speaker's meaning, it can be helpful to ask queries that will help you fill in any blanks in your mental reconstruction of their message.

The Evaluating Stage

At this point, the listener evaluates the knowledge they have taken in on a qualitative and quantitative scale. Evaluating what was heard enables the listener to form an opinion and, if required, start working on a response. Once the listener has grasped the speaker's meaning, evaluation can take place successfully. A listener's ability to assess a speaker's message depends on his or her ability to fully comprehend that message, without having to spend time and effort sorting out ambiguities or addressing points that may be tangential or otherwise unnecessary.

The Remembering Stage

The remembering phase of hearing involves organising and filing away the data picked up from the speaker for later use. If the audience has been paying attention, processing the information, and making judgments, then they will likely have been able to commit names, places, and events to memory. This occurs before, during, and after a speech.

The Responding Stage

At this point in active listening, the listener responds with either vocal or nonverbal responses drawn from working memory. By maintaining the speaker/listener dynamic through nonverbal responses like nodding and eye contact, the listener can convey his or her degree of interest without interrupting the speaker. The speaker/listener roles are temporarily reversed when the listener verbally responds to what they hear and recall, such as with a query or a comment.

The Importance of Listening

Listening is a crucial part of effective conversation in all aspects of life. According to Guo and Wills, "it is the medium through which people gain a large proportion of their education, information, understanding of the world and human affairs, ideals, sense of values." (2006 p. 3). Peterson (2001) argues that "no other type of language input is easy to process as spoken language which is received through listening," and that "by listening, learners can build an awareness of the interworkings of language systems at various levels," which provides a foundation for more fluent productive skills. (p. 87).

The ability to listen is crucial not only in the workplace but also in the school. In most cases, people mistakenly believe that they can communicate successfully in a second language simply because they can read and write in that language. In other words, more than half of the time that pupils spend actually communicating in a foreign language will be spent listening. (Nunan, 1998). Rost (1994) provides the following explanation for why hearing is so crucial in the language classroom:

Learning a language requires a lot of information, and listening is a crucial part of that. It is impossible to start learning without first receiving input at the appropriate degree of difficulty.

Second, learning a language through spoken communication allows for social engagement. Because comprehension requires collaboration between students. The availability of native speakers of the tongue is crucial. Furthermore, the inability of a learner to comprehend spoken language serves as a spur to engagement and learning rather than a roadblock.

Third, it can be difficult for students to grasp how natural speakers of a language actually employ that language.
Forth, as a means of drawing students' attention to unusual linguistic details, teachers can use listening activities. (lexical items, grammatical constructions, and interaction patterns). (p. 141-142).
To sum up, the ability to listen is vital for people to maintain effective communication in both academic and everyday settings. Anderson and Lynch (2003) argue that developing one's listening abilities is just as essential as developing one's speaking abilities, since the two are necessary for effective face-to-face communication. The ability to receive and process knowledge through listening is also crucial for academic success. (Wallace, Stariha & Walberg, 2004).

LISTENING COMPREHENSION PROBLEMS

Research in the area of second language acquisition has shown that listening is one of the most challenging skills for students to master. (Goh, 2000; Guo & Wills, 2006). Students of English as a second language often struggle with listening understanding because of the language's heavy reliance on grammar, reading, and vocabulary. (Gilakjani & Ahmadi, 2011).

The students have trouble "hearing sounds, understanding intonation and stress, coping with redundancy and noise, predicting, understanding colloquial vocabulary, fatigue, understanding different accents, using visual and aural environmental clues," among other things. (Ur, 2007, p. 11-20). Underwood (1989) identifies the following as some of the most common difficulties students face when listening: delivery speed, inability to have words repeated, limited vocabulary, failure to follow signals like transitions, lack of contextual knowledge, inability to concentrate, habits like trying to understand every word in what they hear, and habits like trying to understand everything they hear.

To address the issue, "What is effective listening?" Anderson and Lynch (2003, pp. 5-6) highlight four ways in which the listener can or cannot process incoming speech: (1) the listener may not hear adequately what has been said; (2) the listener may hear words or phrases in the speech but be unable to understand them due to syntactical or semantic problems; (3) the listener may hear and understand the speaker perfectly but have switched off consciously or unconsciously; (4) the listener may not hear and understand the speaker adequately but have switched off completely. Learners of English often struggle with hearing because of the presence of sounds in English that are absent in their mother tongue.

Teachers of second language learners need to devise strategies to help their students engage in listening tasks outside of class in order to help these students overcome the listening difficulties they have identified.
Learners in today's digital era have access to a wealth of online resources for honing their listening skills, and studies show that these resources are effective. The following are a few examples of such instruments and their applications, as chosen by Nik Peachey:(2019).

ONLINE TOOLS FOR DEVELOPING LISTENING SKILLS
Online and Electronic Dictionaries
There is no question that online and electronic dictionaries are of great help to language instructors and learners, especially when compared to thick dictionaries in print. The way we use dictionaries has evolved since the advent of electronic pocket dictionaries, CD/DVD dictionaries, and now smart phones. Some examples of dictionaries that can be found online include the Collins Dictionaries (www.collinsdictionary.com), the Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English (www.ldoceonline.com), and the Cambridge Dictionaries (dictionary.cambridge.org). Teachers can use them to present these resources to their students so that students can hear how words are pronounced and see how they are used in context in sentences. Teachers can use dictionary websites to help students with pronunciation, comparison of definitions from different dictionaries or time periods, finding synonyms and antonyms, learning collocations, and much more by having students complete worksheets based on previously learned or new words.

Lyrics Training
This programme has long been one of my favourites because it makes learning a language as enjoyable as listening to music. Listening to music in different languages can help students learn to decipher words. Students can adjust the challenge by deciding whether they want to reconstruct the full lines or just a select few. The app is designed to be played as a game, so they will have to work quickly to complete each line of the song after the music abruptly stops at the conclusion of each verse. They have to resume the song over from the beginning if they can't finish the line. Using music for text reconstruction helps students listen to the same material over and over again without getting bored. There is a web-based version of the program, and both Android and iOS users can download the service for free. I found using the programme to be a much more satisfying experience. The app can keep tabs on pupil performance once both students and teachers have registered. The Lyrics Training collection can be expanded with the help of an instructor by uploading videos and lyrics to songs that can be used in class.
This app is great for encouraging students to engage in deep listening, but it's important to keep in mind that they can successfully recreate the words of the song without necessarily comprehending them.

Listen Notes
You can find podcasts on just about any subject matter through this search tool. Students can benefit greatly from podcasts because they can be readily downloaded onto mobile devices and listened to whenever it is most convenient. Teachers and pupils alike can benefit from using Listen Notes to locate relevant audio content. After signing up, students can begin "curating" playlists of their favourite podcast programmes to listen to whenever they want to practise their listening skills. If you are creating online resources for your pupils, you can easily incorporate the podcast into your site, materials, or blog thanks to the embed code provided on the site for each episode.

Although there are some podcasts specifically designed for ESL/EFL learners, the vast majority are more appropriate for advanced learners because of their authenticity.

Accent Rosie
Students who already have a Facebook account will benefit greatly from this programme. It's a no-frills app that uses Facebook Messenger to transmit brief audio clips to pupils. The pupils are tasked with taking notes from the audio recording. After submitting their answers via text, they will receive immediate input on how well they did. Students can improve their listening skills in a systematic manner by doing this.

TeachVid
Another app that combines viewing and listening in one convenient package. TeachVid takes YouTube videos as its basis, and constructs a variety of exercises around them, such as text reconstruction, translation, multiple choice, jumbled phrases, and many more. TeachVid's flexibility in allowing

students to pick and choose which hearing exercises they want to do is a great feature. If you join up as a teacher, you'll have access to tools that allow you to make lessons out of any video on the site, distribute those lessons to your students, and keep tabs on how well they did. This is a convenient method for assigning homework requiring pupils to listen and checking their progress.

Read Aloud
This extension for Chrome and Firefox converts written text into spoken word. It only takes a few seconds to install the plug-in, and then pupils can use it on any website by clicking a button on their browser's toolbar. The programme will launch and recite the page's content aloud. It reads aloud and highlights the text as it goes so that pupils can follow along visually. They can pause it and go back in time if they think they overlooked something. It's not a perfect voice, with intonation being the primary issue, but it's very good, and artificial speech is improving all the time. Students' listening and literacy abilities can benefit greatly from this method.

Synth
Using Synth, podcasts can be made more dynamic and interactive for pupils. Teachers can assign their pupils to record a response to a podcast, message, question, or other audio file that they have listened to. The students' hearing skills will improve greatly as they participate in either a group knowledge-gathering exercise or an interactive discussion. It's accessible via iOS or a web browser.

Fluid Data
Anyone looking to hone their hearing skills and expand their vocabulary will find this to be a useful resource. It functions similarly to a corpus in that it stores a large number of linguistic samples, but the data here consists of audio files. To do this, just enter the term you're looking for into the search bar. Fluid Data then displays a collection of audio clips, each with an orange bar highlighting the section of the clip that includes the example phrase. If you want to listen to a particular segment of the clip, just click on the orange bar. This is helpful not only for locating relevant listening materials when teaching a specific topic, but also for helping students review vocabulary and discover real-world usage examples.

Listen and Write
This programme is like Lyrics Training but it has more resources to choose from. Like LyricsTraining, it has you focus on what you hear and write it down, and you can adjust the difficulty by choosing how many of the script's lines you need to type in. The texts in this course are typically more advanced than those in Lyrics Training and feature more advanced vocabulary; as a result, they are best suited for advanced students who wish to focus on honing their listening skills or for students preparing for Cambridge examinations. Motivated students who prefer to study on their own will find this an invaluable resource for expanding their spelling and listening knowledge.

SpeakPipe
Using this app, you can record and submit your own short videos to a server, then distribute the resulting link to your class. You can use this to record short listening exercises or example sentences to help students who are having trouble recalling how to pronounce certain words or phrases. To begin, hit the record icon, then select "Save on sever." You will receive a link that will allow you to share the recording with your pupils, and it will remain on the server for three months. Use this to supplement your studies in listening and speech outside of class.

Video Converter
If you need to extract audio from film or convert files for use on a variety of devices, this is a great option. Sometimes it's helpful to have students watch the video without the sound on so they can concentrate on what they're observing in the characters' facial expressions and body language without being distracted by the dialogue. To convert a video into an audio file or a silent video file, simply add a link to the video or submit the file itself.

Although classroom time is limited, and the pressure to prepare students for exams may not allow for enough time to be given to listening practice, incorporating various ICT tools into listening-practice activities in the classroom can increase the amount of input provided to learners. One option is to have students listen to English outside of class using mobile phones, computers, and other devices to access websites with audio and video content. This allows students to practise active listening skills. If students are at a loss as to what they should listen to on a regular basis, teachers can assist by making suggestions or encouraging group decision-making. As a result, more time can be spent outside of class on discussions and attentive hearing. activities.

CONCLUSION
In conclusion the importance of listening in the process of language acquisition has been brought to the fore. The difference between hearing and listening has shown that listening is volitional with special interest and effort. The various stages of active listening have shown that it is a process that needs to fully be understood for effective listening to take place. Digital tools suggested is hoped to assist both teachers and learners to effectively acquire English Language through listening**.**

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