

Let me to the Listening to Native English - Admit Improvements: A Suggestion on Listening activities for Global Understanding

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About the Author

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Abstract

Listening strategies involving spoken communication through films, music, etc. are the need of the hour to improve the global understanding. Although it poses a challenge in the beginning, the students can learn to understand more quickly by listening to English speakers through a variety of resources. This helps the students; i) to absorb the sounds of the language and understand the context and meaning of conversations ii) to imitate the actors in movies through reading the subtitles out aloud which helps them to build their vocabulary and pronunciations skills iii) to remember words through listening to English songs as the students are emotionally engaged and to understand grammar as the words are structured in a way that makes it easier for the students to segment grammar and to store it in their memories. Overall listening to English songs and movies makes learning fun and interesting.

‘Are you listening?’ is what students heard in classrooms very often because listening is the combination of patience and practice. It is human nature, we love talking more than listening. It takes conscious effort to make the students good listeners. The teaching fraternity has already initiated various methodologies for developing listening proficiency among students. As with the dictum “only a good listener can be a good speaker” we need to integrate listening skill too as part of developing the speaking skill of the learners. Speaking and listening are interlinked and

cannot be separated. As Buck remarks in “Assessing Listening” A necessary condition for testing the full range of listening competence is providing spoken texts that require the same language skills and abilities as realistic as the spoken language. (2001:192)

There is every possibility that students might have difficulties in their listening abilities and the skill is taken for granted by both teachers and syllabus frames as a skill which the students are exposed to all the time through lectures and therefore do not need a deliberate practice. Listening has not received wider attention given that it is the language skill most often used in everyday life. Allen lists in “The Forgotten Skill” that more than forty percent of our daily communication time is spent on listening, thirty-five percent on speaking, sixteen percent on reading, and only nine percent on writing.

Listening is a complete process wherein the auditory system, the brain and language interact. This interaction converses for the realization of one goal i.e. comprehension. The tasks for listening need to involve the understanding of this complete process. Knowing to understand English as a general by listening to any speakers other than the native speakers will not gurantee the global understanding of the students who are ready to go into the global work place. As the students seek employment in foreign contries or in foreign projects in IT sectors or in Call centres, etc. they need to understand Americans, British people, etc. They also need to understand TV news and movies in such countries. Hence, the paper recommends listening to native English. In listening to English, the most important features can be defined as:

1. Coping with the sounds,
2. Understanding intonation and stress.
3. Coping with redundancy and noise,
4. Predicting,
5. Understanding colloquial vocabulary,
6. Fatigue,
7. Understanding different accents,
8. Using visual and environmental clues.

Preparing the students to expose themselves globally it is important for teachers to prepare thoroughly for a listening activity involving the native accent. Activities that are designed to raise interest in the listening task at hand can often make the experience more engaging and enjoyable for everyone. The following examples are the listening experiences that motivate the students in the classroom.

Songs in English to the classroom and when students put in to prepare the material and bring them to the class. Songs provide examples of authentic, memorable and rhythmic language. They can be motivating for students keen to repeatedly listen to and imitate their musical heroes. For example, Listening to part of a song "**Goodbye's (The Saddest Word)**" by Celine and and reponce of the students as per the directions given in the work sheet works well with the them. The work out is graded for beginners and a care is taken not to go to extremes as to make learning fun. (Appendix-1)

Short movie trailers emphasise active listening that entails specific skills for global understanding. For example, listening activity based on the trailer of Toy Story movie which is taken from free English comprehension exercise from learning english feel good.com promotes the desired outcome. Here the students watch and listen to the video clip and attempt the exercises as directed in the work sheet (Appendix-2).

The following suggested activities can also be used for listening comprehension.

- Movies can probably be the better source of linguistic input though the students can't follow a lot of the dialog. Clips from recent movies with listening activities like fill-up gaps will improve the students' listening comprehension skills, helping them to practice native English. For example, trailer of any movie that runs about for five to six minutes with work sheet of five questions can be played.
- A record of a 10-minute interview with celebrities of their interests in hearing about the life.
- Student listen to parts of the song and complete activities that include listening for detail to fill in gaps, antonyms, word order with rhyme.
- English to be understood, the students needs to know which words have distinct pronunciations depending on whether they are used by a Briton or an American. Comparing two songs and asking students to figure out where the speaker is from and why is especially good for them to show the differences between British and American English.

This paper attempts a framework for listening development based on how to understand native speakers through listening to movies and songs. Activities specially for listening primarily need to be ;

Life like situations,
Interesting,
Selective,
Technology based,
Efficient and
Native English based

There is nothing more rewarding for teachers than seeing the students working on such activities to achieve the objectives. This is especially true with teenagers. As motivation is so important when dealing with young learners, doing some activities of their interests will surely improve their global English.

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Appendix-1

Work Sheet : "Goodbye's (The Saddest Word)" by Celine

Mamma

You gave life to me
Turned a baby into a lady

Mamma

All you had to **offer /after** 1 (Choose the right word)
Was the promise of a lifetime of love

Now I know

There is no other day
Love like a mother's **rage/age** love for her child 2 (Choose the right word)

And I know

A love so complete
Someday must leave
Must say goodbye

Goodbye's the saddest word I'll ever hear,

Goodbye's the last time I will hold you near,-----3 (Give an equal rhyming word)

Someday you'll say that word and I will cry,-----4 (Give an equal rhyming word)

It'll break my heart to hear you say goodbye

Exercise: Listen to the song and attempt the FIVE directions given in the brackets. (you can rewind and pause while listening to the song)

Appendix - 2

Exercise: Watch the trailer of 'Toy Story' and answer the questions below. You can rewind and pause the video.

1. At the beginning, what does the mom asks-----
 - a. If the red light means that the camera is broken
 - b. Her son (Andy) to stop playing with the toys
 - c. If the red light means that the camera is on

2. Where is Andy going?
 - a. To work in another city
 - b. To college
 - c. On a trip to Japan

3. What do the toys want to check on the computer?
 - a. Their email
 - b. The news
 - c. How much the're worth on Ebay

4. Where do the toys end up?
 - a. In some kind of daycare
 - b. In some kind of primary school
 - c. In a hospital for sick children

5. Why do the toys want to escape from this place?
 - a. Because the place smells bad
 - b. Because the children treat them very badly
 - c. Because they can't speak to the children

Acknowledgement: Learning English Feel Good.