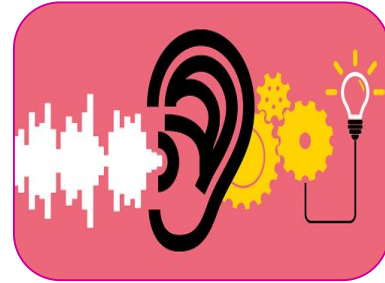




THE ART OF LISTENING SKILL

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ABSTRACT

Learning skill enables a learner to have a command over a local language. By this skill, one can learn any language one by one. In classroom, a teacher delivers his lecture. A student who listens the lecture carefully, he understands the content of lecture. If students ignore the lecture, they do not understand the concept of lecture. If student opts self mode of learning, he finds the lesson rather hard. If he listens to a lecture, and then he reads, he finds the lesson too easy. So listening skill is very important. It depends on the patients of a listener.

KEY WORDS : *Listening, skill, sounds, acquisition, second language, interest.*

INTRODUCTION:

There are four basic skills of learning any language. Listening, Speaking Reading, and Writing (LSRW) are the most important basic skills to learning English too. Our elders always advise: "Talk Less and Listen More". Yes, it is true that of the four skills, listening has a vital role to play. It is true that there are many factors responsible for the listening abilities. The researcher will elaborate in the next part. Listening is the most vital skill to learn a new language. We know that listening depends on patience and attentiveness of a listener. It is true that the skill of learning is complex. There are many theories that advocate many techniques. Language is a living thing. Any language is dynamic. It grows flourishes and blooms forever.

Of all the skills of language, only Listening is most vital. When a child is born in a family, it learns the language of its parents and family. It is just natural. If Marathi child is dropped in an English family, it will speak English very fluently. If an English child is reared in a Marathi family, it will speak Marathi and not English. It means there is a no question of heredity.

Language is imitative. A child imitates the basic sounds of its family. It is true that a child may learn other local languages by learning systematically. So listening is very important. We can learn how to speak, articulate basic sounds of a language. One can learn pronunciation and intonation of a language. It happens very naturally.

Learning skill enables a learner to have a command over a local language. By this skill, we can learn any language one by one. In classroom, a teacher delivers his lecture. A student who listens the lecture carefully, he understands the content of lecture. If students ignore the lecture, they do not understand the concept of lecture. If student opts self mode of learning, he finds the lesson rather hard. If he listens to a lecture, and then he reads, he finds the lesson too easy. So listening skill is very important. It depends on the patients of a listener.

In modern times, lectures are delivered by online mode. In Covid-19 epidemic period, all schools and colleges were closed. Lectures were heavily delivered via online mode. Naturally students resorted to electronic devices such as mobile phones, laptops, computers etc. Virtual Classroom is a new innovation for learners. It requires internet connection at both ends. They are now education tools. It is necessary in a virtual classroom.

Students have to listen to online lectures very carefully. They will note down the important notes in their notebooks. Sometimes a virtual teacher may share some diagrams, pictures, maps and important bar diagrams. It is possible that students may not understand the pronunciations of a virtual teacher. It happens in rural areas. This is a major problem for a majority of students. There will be problem of intonation pattern too.

Students must listen to online lectures very carefully. They must try to understand the accents of a new teacher. If his or her listening skill is well developed, he or she will overcome this problem.

According to Baker (2006) "BICS is said to occur when there are contextual supports and props for language delivery. Face-to-face context embedded situations provide, for example, non-verbal support to secure understanding. Actions with eyes and hands, instant feedback, cues and clues support verbal language. CALP, on the other hand is said to occur in 'context reduced' academic situations. Where higher order thinking skills (e.g., analysis, synthesis, evaluation) are required in the curriculum, language is "disembodied" from a meaningful supportive context. Where language is 'disembodied' the situation is often referred to as 'context reduced.'" (Baker, 2006, p.174)

Listening skill enables students to understand the new lecture in any mode. It is really a boon for students. Listening makes understanding easy. They may remember lecture them very easily. It is a skill and it must be learned carefully.

Students may complete the online mode. They may pass online exam. They may receive certificate from an institution. But the main question is if students have understood the main course or not. Here the answer is hidden in their learning ability.

The Need of Listening Capability:

"No one is as deaf as the person who will not listen." It is an often repeated proverb. Listening comprehension lies at the heart of a language learning, but it is the least understood and least researched skill (Rost 2002). In the second language context, listening without proper comprehension is merely hearing. Yes, it is true that a listener must be attentive. His interest must not be waved off. He must listen to a subject or a lecture, he will comprehend the matter otherwise it will be only hearing. It will be merely a waste of time and energy.

Listening is not difficult. The students from rural areas have excelled in their career due to their listening competence. They had a zest for learning. Learning was the most important in their life. They knew the importance of education. So they developed the skill of listening. This skill enabled them to learn new language, and subjects.

The students have benefited from education. They passed higher exams in life. They secured higher positions in government offices. This happened due to listening skills. In modern times, people are victims of stress and stress. A common man in metros is working round the clock. He does not know what he is doing. For most of people, they do not know what they are doing. Only money is important. Life in cities is hectic. If a person stops working, his family members are sure to starve. So he must run after time. People have no time to listen to others. They have lost patience. If people do not listen to others, there will be misunderstanding. So listening skill is very important.

In a research paper entitled as "Paths to Competence in Listening Comprehension" Krashen et al believe that one of the methods to enhance the listening ability of ESL Learners is Academic Listening, by providing aural comprehensible input of a language teaching programme.

Obstacles in Proper Listening:

According to an expert, academic listening of our country students is affected by many external factors. So many obstacles and barriers co-exist in the process of listening. The voice of a speaker must be clear and audible. It must necessarily be in either a neutral accent or in an accent with which the student is very familiar. The context of the lecture should be relevant to the topic being discussed or else the entire listening process will turn futile. External factors such as topic awareness, clarity, effectiveness, and context are also important in the comprehension process (Samuels, 1984). When such factors are not operating at optimal levels, and /or when the cultural /linguistic context is unfamiliar to the listener, they become misleading or useless as clues to understanding. In addition, the fleeting nature of oral input makes comprehension and verbal learning very difficult (Long, 1990). The voice of the speaker delivering the lecture should be clearly audible and instructors should prepare students for the listening task by teaching advanced vocabulary items, providing them with a general topic statement, and by explaining the listening task in a detailed manner.

The rate of delivery is another important factor of listening comprehensibility. (James 1986,p.41) believes that any recorded 1.2 listening text running over 3 minutes will "Induce sensory overload" unless the topic is of high interest or entertainment value to the listener. For classroom instructional purposes, he states that audio taped segment should not exceed one minute. But this is not applicable to students who are self-learning their topic of interest through audio books or podcasts or audio lectures or YouTube videos. Clearly, it is important to develop 1.2 listening competence, yet, in spite of its importance, L2 learners are rarely taught how to listen effectively. In the Indian context, if some strategies to hone the academic listening skills are developed in Indian Students, in the current scenario the Indian youth can benefit a lot.

It is quite possible that students may be exposed for NPTEL video lectures in the *Swayam* website that features the lectures of a specialized teacher for a particular course or programme. This exercise will surely help the students countrywide to acquisition because their interest in the topic. This will help the students eventually to enhance their Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency. (CALP)

It is now high time to inculcate the habit of listening not to classroom lectures but also to other speakers in the society. Listening skill requires patience. It is not so easy to have patience of mind. Much depends on the temperament of mind. It needs some training at home. A child must be taught to listen first and speak next. People are now more garrulous and go on talking and talking. Everyone talks but is not ready to listen to what the other is trying to express. Listening demands attention of a student.

CONCLUSION:

Listening Skill is very important for students, teachers and parents. This skill should also be developed in online lectures. The success of Virtual classes depends on how the students are more interested in listening to a speaker. Teaching and learning are the two sides of a same coin. This listening skill must be taught to students. If not, it must be learned very carefully. Listening Competence is very important. Our students must learn how to have competence. Academic Language Proficiency in their respective arenas. This language proficiency will work like a magic for further studies. This skill of listening will reach them at the heights in their entire life. There is no alternative than to listening skill.

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