

Role Of Listening Skill In Speaking Skill

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Abstract

Listening plays an important role in developing speaking abilities. There is a wide difference between hearing and listening. Hearing being a physical activity, whereas listening is a mental ability. A Child learns any language by listening to his surrounding sounds and words spoken by his parents. He then tries to imitate same sounds and copies the mannerisms. Various languages are learnt in similar manner. Listening being a passive activity requires great mental effort. It is more focused and concentrated activity.

Keywords: listening, hearing, speaking, LSRW skills.

Imitating is an art, which human beings have adopted since the days when even language was not a tool of communication. Sounds, accents and mannerisms can be adopted and improved by observing and listening to different forms of speaking. Speaking is one such Productive skill which is influenced by Receptive skill like listening skill. Since an early age, man has learnt the art of imitating through actions, sounds, accents, stress and various other forms of speech techniques. We adopt what we deem correct for us to adopt. All the languages are learnt through listening and recreating the word with same effect.

Listening being a Passive activity still it requires a strong mental effort. A listener has to use his senses in order to absorb what is being said. Interest has to be shown towards the speaker by giving various signs of responding through verbal and non-verbal modes. The first step in the listening is hearing. By simply attending to the speaker's words and paying proper attention to it will complete this activity. Hearing requires efforts to overcome various hurdles or obstruction at the time of speaker uttering the words. At the time when speaker is speaking, hurdles like noise can block the listener's correct grasping of the word uttered. The listener need to overcome that hurdle and further avoid any such barrier and grasp the spoken word.

The second step of listening is Interpretation. Interpretation depends on various factors like cultural background, educational qualification, age, gender, attitudes, vocabulary, experience. While interpreting a listener uses all these to understand the meaning of the message spoken. His understanding varies with his educational background, surroundings and also his vocabulary. Many a times a message spoken can be interpreted differently by different listeners, which can create confusion. A teacher while teaching needs to take into consideration the background of the student as well as his understanding of the language.

Body language also plays an important role while interpreting a message. A listener can draw various meanings of a word spoken with different ways of speaking and interpret its meaning differently every time. Here sound, Pitch, tone, Stress and intonation plays an important part while speaking and interpreting a message. Experience of a person plays a crucial role in the interpretation of a word or a sentence spoken. A person with a mature tone and voice with a clarity while speaking makes a message clearer and precise while interpreting. Prejudiced opinion while listening also creates a negative or positive impact while interpretation. Limited Vocabulary and attitude towards the speaker hampers the clear understanding of the message. An attitude can vary person to person and individual to individual. It is a response of a person towards a particular person or situation, which changes from time to time and situation to situation. When a passive listener with all such diversified views, understanding and cultural background interprets a message it is bound to be different and sometimes vague. He listener with all his understanding and knowledge of the word and language keeps it in his mind while studying a particular language. He/She uses his past experience as well as his knowledge to recreate while practicing the art of speaking.

The third step in listening skill is Evaluation. The listener at this stage with his understanding of the word, language and its interpretation decides how to evaluate it and use it for future reference. His evaluation greatly depends on his understanding of the meaning of the word spoken. The impact of the word and his mental ability leads him to decide whether to use it for future reference. At this stage, his judgement depends on his evaluation of the word. Mostly a listener tends to remember what he clearly understands and he keeps on using it for his future references. For example, when a child is shown a picture of a huge snake like Anaconda and the word 'Enormous', he tends to remember the word with something very big like the snake Anaconda. The child may surprise everyone if he is not a native English speaker with his knowledge of the word with the visual impact of the word. He has very clearly interpreted and evaluated the impact of the word and has clearly enriched his speaking skills. This is true of all the native speakers of a particular language and which also creates difficulty for the foreign speakers of the language. So evaluation while listening combined with visual interpretation can greatly affect in the productive use of the language. Different human beings can evaluate a word a message differently. Their physical conditions, cultural background, Educational background may help them to judge a particular word or a message while listening.

The last step is the response. The response given by the listener helps a speaker to understand whether he has understood the message or not. The response may vary from person to person. His response can be verbal or Non Verbal. Responses to the listening activity are sometimes passive with words or body language. It is up to the speaker to understand the positivity or negativity or neutral response by minutely observing the listeners. Sometimes the listener is so engrossed in his listening activity or note taking that he fails to give any response. Responses are generalized by the speaker who is intent to create an impact.

Having seen the four steps of listening we can clearly understand how crucial and intensely active listening can be. Although we take listening as passive activity it requires intense concentration and active mind set. There are blocks to listening as attention and concentration lags and returns in one minute. More blocks which needs to be overcome are the distractions in the mind, wandering attention, lack of interest, tendency to criticize, need

to reply before, self-centeredness, avoiding what is difficult, physical health, anxieties, excitement, external noise, and distraction, need to make notes, impatience etc. All these and many more blocks requires to be overcome in the process of listening.

This lengthy but important process of listening creates a commendable impact on speaking abilities. All the above discussed factors clearly has an impact on the speaking abilities. Any language ability can be developed in a person when he/she listens to it clearly in interest of recreating or learning to use it more precisely.

Pronunciation of a particular language is greatly influenced by the knowledge of his native language. For instance, if we take the pronunciation abilities of a non-English speaker, many words or rather sounds are influenced by the impact of native language. Like sometimes the sound of 'S' is pronounced as 'es' by an Urdu/Hindi speaker. This shows the impact of the native language which is learned through his listening abilities on the selective use of English words and pronunciation. Great care and practice is required to correctly use proper pronunciation of words.

Speaking skill of a person is greatly influenced by the speeches, conversations, Sermons, lectures he/she has listened to in his lifetime. English language teachers always modifies the changing pronunciations of English language by listening to the native English Speakers. The slangs used by the native speakers are tried by the foreign by carefully listening to the word and forming a relationship with the original word.

Moreover accents are greatly copied while speaking through listening and practicing the same. Accents are greatly influenced by the person to whom you choose to listen. One needs intent listening habit to copy the same. Feedbacks given to a speaker needs to be summarized so that proper changes can be made. As everybody speaks to create impression there is always a scope of modifications while speaking. One needs to learn from the mistakes of others. Peer feedback greatly helps in modifications while speaking.

As Dale Carnegie said,

“Great speakers are not born, they're trained”.

Constant listening to great orators will clearly improve Speaking Skills.

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