

DEVELOPING SPEAKING SKILL WITH LISTENING AUDIOS.

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Abstract: Listening skill has been an under-emphasised skill in many English as a Second Language (ESL) classrooms until recent decades. To keep up with the global advancement of technology, many studies on listening skills have integrated use of technology. This paper aims to examine the perceptions of teachers and pupils in using audio clips to develop listening comprehension skills in a rural primary school in Sarawak, East Malaysia, where digital facilities and internet connection are lacking in many parts of the state. Focus group interviews were conducted with two teachers and three ESL pupils after six weekly listening activities using audio clips based on the textbooks.

Keywords: Listening comprehension skills, audio clips, primary ESL classroom.

First of all, the development of speech with its entire content is the student's personality aimed at lateral development. In addition, speech development students information on the mastery of oral speech in the field of psychology, based on the theory of the characteristics of human cognitive activity. Also, speech development is the role of speech activity in the development of students also relies on didactic principles based on the theory of

Speaking and listening have a crucial place in Communicative Language Teaching. When people undertake to learn a new language, their first expectation is to be able to speak it as freely as possible and to understand it easily whenever it is spoken. In the CLT approach, students are encouraged to be involved in speaking and listening activities as much as possible. Still with CLT, the importance of the listening and speaking skills in second language acquisition has been reckoned. According to Tavil (2010), 45% of the competence learners gain is from listening and 30% from speaking. To put it another way, the speaking and listening skills are of paramount importance in language learning and learners acquire more competence from these two skills than from the reading and writing skills. The sources of listening in the class are numerous: songs, tapes, speeches, etc. As such, many activities can be held in class using these sources. However, more importantly, learners can listen to audiovisual programs. The latter is "the combination of audio and visual input". In other words, it is the union of video and sound. Audiovisual programs include TV news, cartoons, and movies, etc. More to the point is the fact that these programs can also be used as a starting point for speaking activities.

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Listening skills have only begun to gain attention in language learning in the recent decades. Traditionally, it is mistakenly assumed that listening skills can be acquired naturally without formal instructions, just as how children acquire their mother tongues through listening to daily conversations. Despite seeming like a receptive and passive skill, studies, however, showed that listening skills should be explicitly taught, especially in second or foreign language classrooms. Listening is the key for learning to take place as they help one to receive and process input. However, before learners listen to learn, they have to learn to listen. As Rose and Dalton claimed, one has to learn much to become a skilful listener.

Audiovisual materials are very effective in the development of the listening and speaking skills and have been the object of much research. Bahrani and Tam (2013) claim that TV programs offer a large range of authentic language materials teachers can use in their class. They affirm, “films, cartoons, news, songs, and documentaries turn out to be effective teaching devices to develop the learner’s language skills and stimulate their imagination simultaneously”. They express the same idea in their other article “Audiovisual News, Cartoons, and Films as Source of Authentic Language Input and Language Proficiency”. In this paper, they set out to show the effectiveness of exposure to news, cartoons, and films on low level learners. In doing do, they have conducted experimentation with 60 low learners divided into three groups. The first group was exposed to news programs, the second to cartoons, and the third to movies. After 10 weeks of exposure, they were submitted to the same test to check their proficiency evolution. Group 1 failed while groups 2 and 3 showed real improvement. The study shows that learners who were exposed to cartoons improved much more than others. The researchers declare that the first group’s failure is due to the fact that news can be full of language inputs that low-level students can find hard to understand. Another reason is the fact that it may contain specialized vocabulary. Bahrani and Tam specify that they took the precaution to give students a glossary of specialized vocabulary but no changes were noticed. They conclude that audiovisual news cannot be used for low levels.

Then, animation movies must be subtitled to ensure that learners can see the written version of that they hear. Rafikadilla and Syafei repeat the words of Willingham who wondered, “why do students remember everything that’s on television and forget what we lecture?” The authors’ answer is quite clear: “because audiovisual media help students retain concepts and ideas” (2013: 266). Animation movies have a rich content and are appropriate tools to use to practice speaking. For example, learners may be asked to describe scenes or action etc. However, to be more effective, they have to be subtitled

in the target language to make learners practice other skills: listening, reading, vocabulary, etc.

Nevertheless, when scrutinised, many studies conducted to enhance listening skills via audio clips utilised authentic materials. Authentic materials refer to resources which are not specifically produced for language teaching and learning, for instance, news report and advertisements on the radio; while non-authentic materials are designed for pedagogical purposes and contain more features of artificiality. Authentic materials play a role in enhancing learners' motivation and learning, as suggested by the above studies, but it appears that authentic materials are more suitable for native learners or learners with a higher proficiency level. According to Guariento & Morley (2001, as cited in Kilickaya, 2004), authentic materials are suitable for learners who are of above average level, as it may cause learners to feel demotivated as they do not have the proficiency to cope with the lexis used in the material. Martinez asserted that authentic materials may not be suitable for learners with low level language proficiency as they will face difficulty interpreting and identifying the content of the material. Also, cultural factor may also hinder beginner-learners to understand and master the language.

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