



RESEARCH ARTICLE

Vol. 7. Issue.4. 2020 (Oct-Dec)

ISSN INTERNATIONAL
STANDARD
SERIAL
NUMBER
EN 1581
2395-2628(Print):2349-9451(online)

LATEST TRENDS IN TEACHING LISTENING AND SPEAKING SKILL IN ESL CLASSROOM

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Article information
Received:30/11/2020
Accepted: 28/12/2020
Published online:31/12/2020
doi: [10.33329/ijelr.7.4.236](https://doi.org/10.33329/ijelr.7.4.236)

ABSTRACT

Developing effective listening and speaking skills in English are the top priority for second language instructors. These skills have major place in language program in the world nowadays. Ability to communicate effectively and clearly is essential for personal as well as professional life. There is a great demand of speaking and listening skills in this globalized world. Many surveys and researches have highlighted that these skills are most required for job market today. Ways of teaching listening and speaking skills have been change today. Today's English teachers needs to keep themselves updated about the current trends and techniques used to teach listening and speaking skills. We need to upgrade our theoretical and practical knowledge about these skills. Therefore, this article highlights the current and latest techniques in teaching speaking and listening skills.

Keywords: Listening & Speaking, Second language learner, communicate, current trends & techniques, upgrade, theoretical & practical.

Introduction

Courses in speaking and listening has major place in English language program in the world nowadays. Way of teaching these skills has changed now. We need to upgrade our theoretical and practical knowledge to teach these skills. Therefore, this article highlights the current and latest techniques in teaching speaking and listening skills.

As teachers, we always hope that our students should speak English fluently and listen us and our assignments and instructions carefully. Speaking and listening are closely related to each other. These skills are less taught and have paid less attention. Listening is least researched of all four language skills. It indicates that it is less understood process.

It is very important for the students who are not native speaker. However, developing listening and speaking is also vital for first language speakers. Speaking plays very important role in every phase of life. It is very important and required in student as well as in professional life. As far as listening is considered, we need to train our students to be a good listener. Sometimes we notice that our students do not listen carefully and do not pay the attention whatever teacher is saying in the class and miss the important points of the lectures and instructions. It can effect their learning. It is a good idea to train explicitly our students for listening skills so students can retain more of the information that are given to them. There is a big demand of speaking and listening in this globalized world.

Students' Perception

Some students have a perception that classroom teaching does not prepare them to face the real world. There are very less pattern of interaction of the real world in the classroom. So now we need to think that how can we teach and prepare our students for real interaction?

The Importance of Speaking and Listening

Good oral communication is necessary in every aspect of life and work. Many surveys have revealed that it is the key skill highly demanded by the employers. People having good communication can explain things clearly and contribute to the meetings and discussion. They have international exposure and are more successful in their career. Good communication skill establishes the positive relationships with others. It is essential from academic points of view too. Students need to have a good command over these skills in order to have productive discussions in all subjects. These skills make them proficient to express their ideas clearly and listen something carefully and understand the point fully. It is very helpful to strengthen the social relationship.

Why Speaking and Listening Matters

Speaking and listening is necessary and fundamental to work and everyday life. People with good oral communication can develop a healthy and productive relationship with others. They can explain things clearly and make case for themselves. Oral communication is the skill most valued by the employers. Listening and speaking are the core component of second language proficiency. There are many surveys that tell that employers are looking for the people who are good at communicating.

Challenges encountered while teaching listening skill

To understand better the difficulties faced in teaching listening skill, we should begin by identifying the challenges faced by students while undergoing listening. There is lack of interest among students for listening. It is noticed that very few of them pay attention on the materials that is being played in the classroom. It seems tiring for them. To tackle this problem, it is very necessary to provide materials that are interesting for students. Fast recording is also a reason for students to not pay attention. Mostly students are not able to follow entire text in English because of variation in cultural background and regional accents.

It is found that mostly teachers have spoken about the problems faced while teaching listening are practical. Lack of equipped labs is the first problem. Equipped lab is the first requirement to run teaching listening in effective and smooth way. Many universities and institutes have prescribed listening skill but do not have equipped labs. Another problem in teaching listening skill is the unavailability of integrated listening materials. Materials should be suitable and interesting that can suit the interest and cultural of the students. The available listening materials do not suit the learners' culture.

Current trends in teaching listening skill

Presently, the role of listening in learning and teaching foreign language has significantly changed because of the development in the field of information technology and availability of free authentic audios and videos materials on the internet. The availability of free online audio and video materials has provided the opportunity for new language teaching sequences. The use of authentic audio and video materials to teach language skills provides the ideal opportunity for students to listen native speakers of English and foreigners with different accents.

Latest techniques to teach listening and speaking skills

LISTENING

Teaching listening skill is a challenging task. It might be ambiguous. There are numbers of principles that apply in teaching listening skill in English. Listening requires fundamental skill of focussing attention on the speaker. A good listener must be able to hear and understand what speaker is saying. Actively engagement in

learning is basic requirement for achieving mastery on listening and speaking skills. Teachers can make listening skills more effective by applying the following principles:

- make it explicit
- Model is needed for active listening
- Practice might be especially important for active listening
- Teaching activities and games that can demonstrate listening skills while also having fun.

TED Talks can be used as an extensive materials for teaching listening skills. Since 1984, TED Talks has featured lectures from around the world on technology, entertainment, and design. These lectures are available to the general public and have been used by educators since going online in 2007 (TED Talks, n.d.). Free transcripts in English and subtitles in over 40 languages accompany most of the lectures, delivered by native and non-native English speakers.

TED Talks lectures can improve students' listening skills through exposure to authentic speech. It would be enjoyable and informative lectures for students that would motivate them to pursue tasks on their own beyond the class and course.

SPEAKING

Deep listening is basic requirement for productive conversation. Speaking skills require students to take turns, speak confidently, stay on topic, and speak with clarity. Following techniques might be beneficial for teaching speaking skills:

- ESL teachers should create a classroom environment where students can have real life communication, authentic activities and meaningful tasks.
- Conducting group discussion in effective way. Discussion can be held for various reasons. Students' purpose should be arrive at a conclusion, sharing ideas about the topic and finding the solution of the problems in the discussion group. It is important for teachers to set the discussion activities before starting the discussion.
- Role play is another effective techniques to involve students for speaking
- Story telling is also a good way to enhance speaking skill. Teacher can ask students to summarize a story that he/she has heard or read. It would be also asked to create and tell their own stories.
- Students can conduct interviews on selected topics with various people. Conducting interviews with people provides opportunities to practice their speaking ability not only in class but also outside of the class and helps them becoming socialized.

Suggestions for Teachers

- Teachers should provide maximum opportunities to students to speak target language by providing authentic material and tasks
- Try to involve each students in every speaking activity.
- Teachers should try to minimize their speaking time and should increase students speaking time. Teachers can observe students speaking.
- Indicate positive sign while commenting on students' performance.
- Avoid correcting student's pronunciation while they are speaking.

- Avoiding listening tasks that require memorization.

Conclusion

Teaching listening and speaking skills is very important part of second language learning. The ability to communicate effectively and listen efficiently in a second language contributes to the success of the learner in academic as well as in every phase of life. Therefore, it is very important for language teachers to pay great attention to teach these skills. The activities associated with real life situations can be very effective and interesting for learners. With this aim some techniques and strategies have been discussed above that can be helpful to teach these skills. These techniques make students more active in the learning process and at the same time make their learning more meaningful and fun for them.

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