

communicative competence, and foster cultural awareness, educators can empower students to develop language proficiency, critical thinking skills, and intercultural competence. Studies have shown that interactive approaches are beneficial for students' motivation, engagement, and language learning. They are also useful for encouraging meaningful conversation in the target language and active learning. By embracing interactive methods in foreign language instruction, educators can create dynamic and student-centered learning environments that prepare students to become proficient and confident communicators in an interconnected world. Ultimately, interactive methods not only enhance language learning outcomes but also cultivate 21st-century skills essential for success in a globalized society.

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APPROACHES TO TEACH THE MOST DIFFICULT SKILL: LISTENING

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Abstract. *Listening is often considered one of the most challenging skills to master in language learning. It requires not only hearing the words but also understanding their meaning, context, and nuances. Effective listening skills are crucial for communication and comprehension in any language. Furthermore, it involves not only hearing the words but also understanding the message, empathizing with the speaker, and providing appropriate responses. In this article,*

we explore various approaches to teaching listening skills, aiming to enhance learners' proficiency and confidence in this critical area.

Keywords. *Listening skills, language learning, comprehension, communication, teaching approaches.*

Listening has been defined by many researchers. Chastain (1971) defined listening as the ability to understand native speech at normal speed. Morley (1972) said listening involves auditory discrimination, aural grammar, selecting necessary information, remembering it, and connecting it to the process between sound and form of meaning. So listening is a process of receiving what the speaker says, making and showing meaning, negotiating meaning with the speaker and answering, and creating meaning by participation, creativity, and empathy. And due to the increased concentration and attention required to comprehend the information, listening was often regarded as the most difficult language skill for foreign language students in particular settings of the language classroom due to the sophisticated process (Alzamil, 2021).

Below there are various approaches to teaching listening skills, aiming to enhance learners' proficiency and confidence in this critical area.

Comprehension Strategies: teaching learners comprehension strategies, such as predicting, summarizing, inferencing, and clarifying, equips them with the tools to navigate challenging listening passages effectively. By explicitly teaching these strategies, instructors empower learners to become more autonomous and effective listeners. Moreover, conducting workshops dedicated to active listening can provide participants with practical techniques and strategies. These workshops can include exercises such as paraphrasing and reflecting feelings to help individuals engage more effectively with speakers.

Interactive Listening Activities: engaging learners in interactive listening activities can significantly improve their comprehension skills. Activities such as role-plays, simulations, and group discussions encourage active participation and help learners develop strategies for understanding spoken language in real-life situations. Also role-playing scenarios where participants take turns being the

speaker and the listener can be invaluable for practicing listening skills in a safe environment. This approach allows individuals to experience both perspectives and gain insights into the importance of active listening cues such as body language and verbal acknowledgments.

Utilizing Multimedia Resources: exposing learners to authentic materials, such as podcasts, interviews, movies, and songs, provides them with exposure to natural language use. Authentic materials offer rich linguistic input and expose learners to various accents, vocabulary, and cultural contexts, thereby enhancing their listening comprehension skills. Analyzing and discussing these resources can help learners develop a broader understanding of effective listening across various contexts.

Focused Listening Tasks and Mindful Practices: implementing focused listening tasks helps learners concentrate on specific aspects of listening, such as identifying main ideas, understanding details, or recognizing intonation patterns. Breaking down listening activities into manageable tasks enables learners to develop targeted listening strategies and improve their overall comprehension abilities. Teaching mindfulness techniques can help individuals become more present and attentive listeners. Practices such as deep breathing, mindful listening exercises, and focused attention can enhance concentration and reduce distractions, enabling better comprehension and engagement during conversations.

Feedback and Reflection: providing constructive feedback and opportunities for reflection are essential components of teaching listening skills. Encouraging individuals to review their listening experiences, identify areas for improvement, and set goals for future interactions fosters continuous growth and development.

In conclusion teaching listening skills is a complex but essential aspect of language education. By employing a variety of approaches, instructors can create dynamic and engaging learning environments that cater to diverse learner needs and preferences. By incorporating interactive activities, authentic materials, multimedia resources, focused tasks, comprehension strategies, and opportunities for feedback and reflection, educators can empower learners to become proficient

and confident listeners in their target language. Developing the ability to listen attentively not only strengthens interpersonal relationships but also cultivates empathy, understanding, and mutual respect in diverse social and professional settings.

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