

PEDAGOGY OF ENGLISH



ACQUISITION OF LANGUAGE SKILLS



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ACQUISITION OF LANGUAGE SKILLS

Introduction

Acquiring a second language skills are an important component as English Language plays a prominent role in the Indian Context. English Language is used as an Associated Official Language of the country by the parliament Act 1963 to an indefinite period of time. It has prominence in the Indian context as a link language, language of the court, language in the field of educational system, national life, supreme in the pre-independent India, language of the administration, medium of instruction of the university, in the field of medicine, science and technology, medium for official communication and a window to the world.

In India English language is taught and learned as second language in schools. It is taught and learned as skill subjects rather than knowledge subject. Hence the **English language skills have to be acquired not learned as content subject**. Therefore, every learner needs to acquire competency over **Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing (LSRW) Skills**. As would be teachers one requires to imbibe thorough knowledge of language skills and sub skills of LSRW.

LISTENING SKILLS



Listening is the ability to accurately/precisely receive and interpret messages during the communication process, which demands listening ability. We understand that language is a psychological behaviour, it involves wide scope of cognitive, affective and psychomotor domain. Hence in order to develop the second language skills one needs to develop accurate listening skills.

Sub Skills of Listening

Sub Skills of listening could be divided into two types, such as Micro level sub- skills and Macro level Sub Skills of listening.

Micro level sub- skills

Micro level sub- skills refer to understanding a concept while listening, remembering an information, following directions after being instructed, evaluating an information or a concept that is been heard or listened, grasping the meaning of the information received, enjoying a concept or listening to a person's message or a song, identifying or recognizing a person with the voice from an audio, or on a phone call, reacting or responding to a message, information or to a communication, conversation (infant's respond to the mother), debating on the concept or debating in reality having heard, entertaining someone with a joke, comic or an anecdote and supporting via responding.

Macro level sub- skills

a) Listening for Perception refers to focused listening, while listening to a particular person, or a lecture, we do not listen to everything being said but the important points and aspects are **selectively** listened, having listened the information is processed through **organizing** process where the information is stored in the memory device, then one could **interpret** the meaning of the information based on one's interest. Hence listening for perception takes place as a process: **SELECT** → **ORGANIZE** → **INTERPRET**

b) Listening for comprehension - Hearing is the involuntary physical process of sensing, but listening is the voluntary mental process of perceiving what is being heard. In order to comprehend an announcement or a question being asked or a concept being discussed requires focused listening. For instance, listening to an announcement at the railway station on the arrival and departure of trains or an announcement at a bus station. Persons waiting for a particular train or bus would pay focused listening to comprehend what is being announced.

c) Listening to Conversation – “Don't listen to what I am saying, listen to what I want to say”. Listening to conversation demands a focused or intensive listening, only then the conversation would be meaningful. Hence Macro Level Sub Skills demand focus and intensive listening ability towards a meaningful, effective learning and communication.

Two ways of listening

Listening could be equated with receptive skill that involves one to recognize information in isolation and in Combination, Intonation and with Stress. Hence listening could be enhanced in two ways, which are known as **Casual and Focused Listening**. Casual listening refers to listening to information casually, such as while eating or having a cup of coffee listening to radio, television news as well listening to your friend or parents talking to you. Casual listening does not demand intensive ear. On the contrary Focused listening refers to listening to a class, watching a news for a specific information, or listening to an instruction in a physical or chemistry laboratory. In order to understand and comprehend what is being instructed one needs to be focused and to pay attention with complete concentration.

Listening For Perception

Aims at decoding the sound and grasping the meaning behind them and to recognize difference between sounds that's to understand exactly the phonetic sounds such as **P & B, in pit & bit and beat, come / k/ and gum /g/, big /i/ and beg /e/.**

Listening to specific information & listening for general understanding

Listening to specific information and listening for general understanding necessitate to possess the previous knowledge on mastery of vocabulary, mastery of sentence structure, mastery of grammar, listening and understanding spoken English tasks.

Comprehension



What does comprehension mean with reference to listening skill?

Comprehension refers to the ability to discriminate among sounds, recognize reduced or weak form of words and phrases, recognize stress, rhythm and tone pattern, process utterances spoken at different speeds, detect sentence constituents, take note of expression of different meaning, aware of cohesive devices used in speech, distinguish between literal and implied meaning

Three Phases of Listening

Listening could be categorized into three phases depending on the individual's readiness to listen. The first phase of listening is known as **Sensing or Pre-Listening**.

a) Sensing (Pre-Listening)

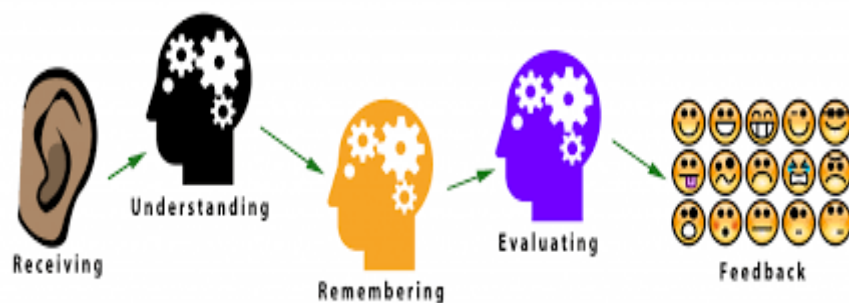
Sensing or pre-listening refers to, when a person knows to whom he/she is going to listen to or has the knowledge of the person who is addressing. When a well-known person who is good at delivering an information, message, or has the debating ability, then a person would look forward to listen to him/her voluntarily and willingly. Such process is known as sensing. For instance, if a person loves to listen to Mr. Barack Obama's address and if the person knows that the speaker is going to be Mr. Barack Obama the former president of U.S.A, then he/she would be looking forward to listen. Such process is known as sensing or pre-listening. In another word you get ready to listen to a person even before the actual address begins. Sensing the one who is going to speak and accordingly paying attention to the speaker. On the contrary if you know the person who is addressing is not an effective person in his communication, then you may decide to sleep.

b) Interrelating (During Listening)

Interrelating refers to while you listen to for instance, if you are listening to an address by Mr. Barack Obama the former president of U.S.A, when he delivered his first address as president elect, as you listen to him, you may in the process may imagine the similar address by Dr. Martin Luther King, at the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C., where he gave his "I Have a Dream" speech on 28th August 1963, such process is known as interrelating that happens during the listening procedure.

c) Recording (After Listening)

The third phase recording refers to the reflection or thinking about the speech or information that's been heard. The reflection or thinking process after actual listening is known as recording, because the more one thinks repeatedly, the more it gets into the long-term memory as a recording process, which remains forever in the memory device. Apart from the above three phases of listening, there are two more phases, which are known as Evaluating & Responding. Hence the process of listening could be comprehended as,



Receiving = Sensing, Understanding = Interrelating, Remembering = Recording

Listening Material to Enhance Specific Information

In order to have or achieve general understanding, one need to possess competency over Mastery of Vocabulary, Mastery of Sentence Structure and Mastery of grammar or Grammatical Structures. Competency over above criteria could be achieved by listening to English news from Television or radio, listening to native speakers of English via audio or video conferencing, as well as intensive listening enhances the ability. One could pay intensive listening to the announcement in the radio, television, weather report, over the phone and to face to face conversation. Listening material also include anything from telling a story, listening to a comic, poem, an anecdote, commentary at various sports meet, at the library, physical, chemistry and bio science laboratory. it could also be extended to announcement during the assembly, announcement at the railway station, airport and intensive listening to the lectures of various courses and subjects.

Listening Activities

There are a number of activities could be organized to enhance listening skills.

1. Dictation Technique

In the dictation technique a teacher reads and students listen which enhance the training of ears and to link with the sounds with the spellings, grammatical structures and spellings. The stress and intonation enable the pupil to understand the sound pattern. When a teacher reads while dictating, the students learn the correct use of punctuations and pronunciations, which demand focused attention in order to understand the meaning in groups.

2. Following a route

While visiting a mall, railway station, bus station, airport and visiting various tourist places a guide explains the route. In order to get the correct information, one needs to pay focused

attention so as not to miss the information. If the information is provided with clear explanation the listener needs to be an alert listener. Such exercises enhance listening skills.

3. Listening to a telephone call

Listening to a phone call demands focused listening. It enables the listener to know and identify the caller, where the call is from, whether it is from a friend or an official or a stranger. If it is a business call, then it requires attentive listening, such as listening to customer call, listening to an official from the work place, or to a reception, ordering meals, getting permission from a principal or a manager. These exercises require intensive listening and as a result develop listening skills.

4. Listening to Commentaries

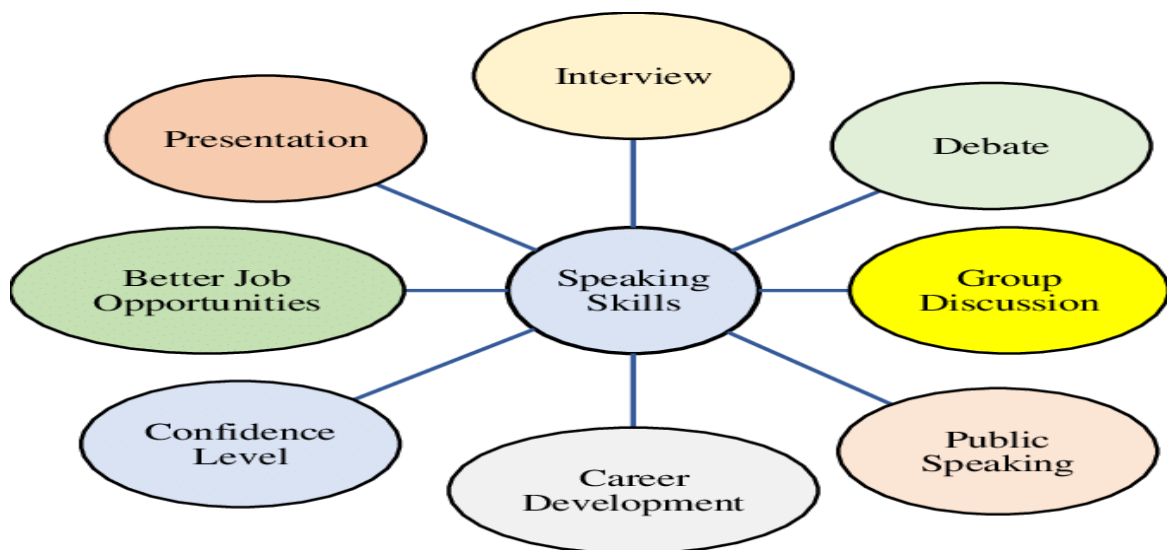
Listening to any commentaries involve intensive and extensive listening. For instance, listening to cricket commentary and if a favorite player hits a sixer, then automatically the ears sharpen.

5. Listening to instruction

Listening to teacher's instruction in any class room or outside the classroom is always done with intensive listening. During the experiments, a teacher instructs the procedure which is listened with focused and with intensive ability and filling up examination forms demands focused listening ability. Such activities enhance listening skills.

Listening is one of the language skills that precede other skills of any language. Be it a Mother Tongue which is known as First Language or Language one, which is denoted as MT or L1. Only if listening skills are developed then the speaking skills follow without any hindrance. It could be rightly stated listening skills promote speaking skills. Learner of second language must develop the listening skills. The teachers must enable the listening skills by the learners through various activities. The second language should be taught and learned as skill subject and not as a content subject. Since the teachers teach English as a content subject, the result has a negative impact on the learners as they do not develop the second language skills effectively.

SPEAKING SKILLS



Language is a psychological behavior which involves an individual's intrinsic and extrinsic motivation both voluntary and involuntary cooperation of cognitive abilities. A child doesn't learn the first language rather he or she acquires the First Language or Mother Tongue (L1 / MT). Where as a second language is learnt in a systematic way. A learner needs to a clearly understand the meaning of what is meant by acquisition and learning. **Acquisitions refers to imbibing the language ability through an unconscious process and in an informal manner**, where an infant at the imitation and incubation period imbibes the first language and at a stage suddenly starts speaking. **Learning is defined as conscious process where learning takes place in a formal setting and in a systematic manner.** Thus, acquiring second language skills demand sincere dedication and an appropriate aptitude and attitude.

The goal of developing speaking skills focused towards effective communication, use current language proficiency to the fullest at the same time avoiding faulty pronunciation, grammar and vocabulary applying the social and cultural rules. There are number of techniques and activates could be implemented to develop speaking skills of second language. Let's discuss the various techniques and activities those enhance speaking skills of second language learners.

1. Conversation Class

Success is measured in terms of the ability to carry out a conversation in the target language”. David Nunan.

“Do not learn how to speak & no opportunity to speak will be de-motivated” Hence an English teacher must provide a lot of scope for the learners at primary, secondary and at higher secondary level. If appropriate opportunity is provided to the learners, then the speaking ability will emerge to communicate in second language.

The conversation between a teacher and students, between a student and to student (pair) and in groups would remove the inhibitions. In order to have an effective conversation that results in developing speaking skills, the class rooms must be arranged accordingly. Teacher must plan well before the schedule of the class. Hence;

- Arrangement of classroom must be different to suit a conversation between peers and groups.
- Encourage students to raise questions.
- Provide positive feedback to encourage and to relax shy students.
- Allocate a percentage to final grade which encourages students to speak.
- Let the students know they are being continually assessed.
- Conversation without silence.
- We learn to speak by speaking.
- Model conversation, role play and dialogue should be planned by a teacher before the learners practice in groups.

2. Topic Based / Task Discussion Class

Topic based discussion enables the learners to express his or her ideas and views. Teacher must facilitate the process as the learners are expected to come up with meaningful sentences. To make the discussion meaningful, teachers must select the topics those that are relevant and interesting to the age group of the learners. The topic also must be selected according to the level of the pupil, which should be familiar topics. Teacher must guide the students to express their views in coherent manner. Systematic way of presenting the ideas during the conversation.

The teacher first shows a model of task-based conversation or learning which is known as pre-task. For instance, the following example depicts what exactly is a pre-task. The teacher flashed or narrates or states...

“We live in Chennai. My mother is a home maker. My father works at Tamil Nadu Electricity Board. My mother wakes up at 5.00 am every day. My father wakes up at 6.00 am. I wake up at 6.30 am every day. We have breakfast at 8.00 am. My father leaves for work at 9.00 am. I leave for my school at 9.15 am. My mother does the entire house chores. I come home by 4.30 pm. My father comes by 6.00 pm.” (Pre- Task)

Procedure of Pre-task

Teachers reads the above content and explains the content as she reads it line by line as well checks whether the students have understood the concept. Then she /he puts forwards a few questions based on the task, for example;

- When do you wake up in the morning?
- What time does the father wake up?
- What time do you have your breakfast?
- When does the boy/ girl leave for school?
- What time does the father come from work?
- When does the boy/ girl come from school?

The students respond answering the questions. If a learner makes a grammatical mistakes or structural errors, the teacher reframes the students responds correctly and repeats it aloud. Now the teacher divides the students into group of 4 or 5 students in each group. Each group gets a new task which is known as post task exercise. The students in group select a monitor who keeps the group discussion on track and to take down the responses of the students. Now the students in each group go through the task, understand the task and answer the questions. If a student makes a mistake while responding, the others in the group help him to state the response correctly. Hence every learner gets a chance to speak, read and to clarify. It engages the learners to maximum. The teacher acts as a facilitator while they carry on the group discussion. Such task-based learning enables the learners to develop speaking skills effectively. Teacher must introduce vocabulary and structure those are familiar to the level of the learners and the age group. The post-task could be on the topic; **After Visiting a Zoo or on an**

Excursion, such topics would instill enthusiasm of the learners since have knowledge and the leaners would speak with enthusiasm to share the information.

3. Task Centered Fluency Practice

Task based or task centered fluency practice is similar to that of task-based learning or speaking. The teacher must ensure that the exercise is;

- planned according to the level and age group of the learners.
- Familiar structure and vocabulary.
- Questioning and answer drill.
- Dialogue with roles and in pairs.
- Conversation among groups.
- Selecting a topic for discussion – task centered fluency.
- Including creative ideas.
- Express them in structures they have mastered.
- Emphasis on the topic with feeling, intonation and rhythm.
- Move from one idea to another in meaningful sentences using appropriate connectors.

4. Debate

Debate is introduced to standard 9th onwards and to higher secondary level, where the students would have imbibed language proficiency to speak and express the ideas on their the own with coherence and confidence. Teacher must ensure the topics chosen are relevant and interesting, such as;

- Is watching Television a boon or a bane?
- Mobile phone a boon or a bane?
- Friendship enhances learning or does not enhance learning

Debate serves as good medium to improve and express the skill of speaking / speaking skills.

5. Task for an Individual Student to Develop Speaking Skills

Although in the Indian classroom situation where most of the time it is an over crowded classroom and it is difficult to pay attention to individual learners, yet a few tasks can be planed, such as

- a) **Parallel Sentence Drill.**

Example,

- Tarsus enjoys eating ice cream.
- Suresh enjoys eating chocolates.
- Geetha enjoys eating Poore.
- Meera likes watching cricket.
- Noor likes watching tennis.
- Ramani likes playing football etc.

b) Question Answer Drill

Asking questions and make the learners to answer for instance using 'often & never', while and therefore etc. and make the learners to use similar questions to their friends, as well as providing sufficient opportunity to all the student to participate in oral drills.

c) Role play

Addressing on role play although, group of students get involved yet various roles are assigned to individual student, hence each individual student prepares to deliver his/her part accordingly as delivering a relevant sentence according to the situation. The instructions from the teacher and the tips from the group enable the individual learners to deliver it as natural as possible. Hesitancy of an individual learner to speak Infront of the group could be easily overcome.

6. Task for pair work

Planning task for pair work demands teacher's maximum involvement and organizing skills. The exercise enables the learners to have controlled oral practice, enables pupil's vocabulary and certain grammatical structures and even reading activity. Ask and answer drill in front of the class develops confident to answer and question. A few pairs repeat the dialogue as it is demonstrated in front of other students. For instance;

What happens if you eat too much of food?

What happens if you drop a matchstick in a can of petrol?

What happens if you leave a piece ice in the sun?

Pattern Practice

Pupil 1: What food do you like?

Pupil 2: I like beef.

Pupil 3: What soft drink do you prefer?

Pupil 4: I like to drink hot chocolate, etc.

7. Guessing Game

language games could be organized and implemented as interesting as possible to enhance speaking skills. Guessing game could be conducted any time even without any prior preparation. The procedure of the game as follows;

A teacher selects a picture, it could be of any picture and she doesn't show to the pupil/pupils who participate in the game, while other students observe and learn. The teacher sticks the picture on the back or states "I have a picture and gives clues based on the picture". For instance,



It is used for travel, flies fast etc. A single picture is selected for a game. The student is expected to use close ended questions such as;

Is it bag?

Is it a trolley?

Does it have various couleurs on)

Does it have lights? etc.

Such exercise enables them with speaking as well as question skills. The rest of the class would answer the student stating, It's not a bag. It does have some colours. It does have lights. etc

So pictures could be on any theme such as stated above as a blue sky, of a car, tree and etc.

READING SKILLS

Reading skills are meant for comprehending, understanding the meaning of words, relationship between a group of words in a sentence and the ideas it conveys.

Methods of Teaching Reading to Beginners

There are a number of methods those introduced to enhance reading skills to the beginners at primary level. The first one is;

i) Alphabetic Method.

A teacher teaches the alphabets to the learners by actually writing each alphabet on the board and gives the diction / pronunciation for each letter, the learners repeat after the teacher. As well a number of charts depicting alphabets with different colours are posted on the walls, which instills curiosity and motivates the learners, because young children/ learners get attracted to colours and colourful pictures.

ii) Phonic Method

The method refers to paying emphasis on each alphabet along with its phonic sound. The teacher teaches every alphabet with picture representation, such as shown in the picture / chart. The learners learn identify different phonetic sounds, such as C for Cat and G for Goat et.



iii) Word Method

Teacher enhances the reading ability of the students and the reading skills by using pictures those gives meaning to the associated words. Such as A for Apple, B for Ball, C for Cat, etc...

iv) Sentence Method / Look & say Method

It is introduced from class / standard three onwards. At this stage the children have the competency over phonetic sounds of the alphabets, so reading is initiated using small sentences, where they look at the picture / pictures, objects along with the sentence/ sentences and say, For instance,

I am a girl. I am a boy. This is a book. That is a chair. etc. Such method of teaching reading is known as Sentence Method or Look and say Method.

v) Eclectic Method

When learners are in standard five / fifth grade this method is introduced. Eclectic method refers to combination of all the other method stated above, according to the context and the learning concepts, whenever there is a need the teacher implements the method.

Types of Reading

- i) **Loud reading** is introduced at the initial and primary level, where the second language learners need to imbibe the correct pronunciation and diction. The speech organs need to be synchronized to pronounce a particular alphabet or word and a sentence appropriately. So, the teacher must possess competency over reading skills, so the learners could observe and imitate the reading style.
- ii) **Silent reading** is introduced at secondary level, because by now the students have the ability to read and understand the meaning of every word, increase vocabulary.

So, at the Indian context silent reading is implemented from grade VIII onwards. It enables the learners to read fast and understand the meaning quickly, the eye span moves rapidly. Learners read a number of story books in the library and even learn other subjects.

- iii) **Intensive reading** When the students are in higher secondary then the intensive reading is introduced. With the knowledge of enhanced second language they are able to read, novels, fictions, biography, autobiography, related articles and magazines, at this level they are able to grasp the meaning quickly and can read fast paying attention to every detail of the subject underhand.
- iv) **Skimming** with enhanced language skills the learners are able to skim any newspapers and get the information. It orients towards gathering information quickly.
- v) **Scanning** refers to in-depth study of a concept to understand and analyze the information. For instance, looking for a phone number from the directory, looking for a meaning in a dictionary etc.
- vi) **Supplementary reading** to enhance the reading ability and to learn new and hard dictions supplementary reading is introduced from grade VI onwards. Reading of additional related content to enhance reading skills and information.
- vii) **Library reading** where learners are taught to enhance silent reading of the material, novels, fictions, comic books, story books and newspapers silently to grasp the content on the whole as well as to enhance the vocabulary.

Thus, reading skills need to be paid attention so the learners learn to read English as English.

WRITING SKILLS

Characteristics of Good Handwriting

It is mandatory that the learners need to imbibe writing skills. A teacher who teaches at preprimary and primary level must have competency of possessing good handwriting. Good writing refers to Distinctiveness, Legibility, Simplicity and Uniformity of space between each letter, space between one word to another word in a sentence and between one sentence to another sentence and Capitalization. Appropriate use of capital letters needs to be learned to enhance effective writing skills.

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