



THE MECHANISMS OF LISTENING SKIL AND ITS PROBLEMS

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Annotation: *This article explores the complexities of developing listening comprehension skills in language learners. It identifies major psychological and technical barriers, such as "mental blocks," the habit of internal translation, and the lack of cultural background knowledge. Drawing on pedagogical analogies like physical fitness training, the author suggests a gradual, consistent approach to listening practice. The study emphasizes the importance of "gist listening," avoiding direct translation, and the necessity of exposing students to diverse discourse types. The findings suggest that by shifting student attitudes toward accepting partial understanding and practicing short, frequent sessions, significant improvement in comprehension can be achieved over time.*

Keywords: *Listening skills, language pedagogy, mental block, internal translation, gist comprehension.*

Introductions. It is true that teaching listening skills is one of the most difficult tasks for any language teacher no matter where to work. This is because successful listening skills are acquired over time and with lots of practice. It's frustrating for students because there are no rules as in grammar teaching and skill requires inborn ability to have a good ear. Speaking and writing also have very specific exercises that can lead to improved skills. Sometimes other skills are used to develop listening skill. This is not to say that there are not ways of improving listening skills, however they are difficult to quantify. One of the largest inhibitors for students is often mental block and coming out their inborn abilities they may have poor ear to listen. While listening, a student suddenly decides that he or she doesn't understand what is being said. In this case learns need more self study also as class listening work is not enough to develop that vivid skill. At this point, many students just tune out or get caught up in an internal dialogue trying translating a specific word. Some students convince themselves that they are not able to understand spoken English well and create problems for themselves.

Materials and methods. They key to helping students improve their listening skills is to convince them that not understanding is OK. Why? Because recognizing foreign sounds and understand the meaning of the listening material is not easy for just beginners. Harmer says that this is more of an attitude adjustment than anything else, and it is easier for some





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students to accept than others. Imagine you want to get in shape. You decide to begin jogging. The very first day you go out and jog seven miles. If you are lucky, you might even be able to jog the seven miles. However, chances are good that you will not soon go out jogging again. Fitness trainers have taught us that we must begin with little steps. Begin jogging short distances and walk some as well, over time you can build up the distance. Using this approach, you'll be much more likely to continue jogging and get fit.

It shows that students need to apply the same approach to listening skills. Encourage them to get a film, or listen to an English radio station, but not to watch an entire film or listen for two hours. Students should often listen, but they should listen for short periods – five to ten minutes. This should happen four or five times a week. Even if they don't understand anything, five to ten minutes is a minor investment. And teacher of course should observe very carefully, and try to find the problem. If the problem in listening itself, the learners are given extra time for listening the material till they understand it. However, for this strategy to work, students must not expect improved understanding too quickly. The brain is capable of amazing things if given time; students must have the patience to wait for results. If a student continues this exercise over two to three months their listening comprehension skills will greatly improve. The following advices can be given to the learners:

- Accept the fact that you are not going to understand everything.
- Stay relaxed when you do not understand – even if you continue to not understand for a long time.
- Do not translate into your native language
- Listen for the gist of the conversation. Don't concentrate on detail until you have understood the main ideas

In the beginning, they may not understand a word. If they translate while listening, it usually results in confusion. Firstly, translating creates a barrier between the listener and the speaker. Secondly, most people repeat themselves constantly. By remaining what the speaker says.

Translating creates a barrier between yourself and the person who is speaking.

While you are listening to another person speaking a foreign language, the temptation is to immediately translate into your native language. This temptation becomes much stronger when you hear a word you don't understand. This is only natural as we want to understand everything that is said. However, when you translate into your native language, you are taking the focus of your attention away from the speaker and concentrating on the translation process taking place in your brain. This would be fine fine if you could put the speaker on hold (phrasal verb to make a person wait). In real life however, the person continues talking while you translate. (Omaggio Hadley, 2001). This situation obviously leads to less not more-understanding. We have discovered that translation leads to a kind of block in my brain which sometimes doesn't allow listener to understand anything at all!





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Most people repeat themselves. Let's think for a moment about our friends, family and colleagues. When they speak in your native tongue, do they repeat themselves? We don't mean literally, we mean the general idea. That means that whenever we listen to someone speaking, it is very likely that he/she will repeat the information, giving you a second, third or even fourth chance to understand what has been said. By remaining calm, allowing them to not understand, and not translating while listening, learners brain is free to concentrate on the most important thing: understanding English in English. Another problem for learners, whose exposure to spoken English is limited to the classroom, is becoming over accustomed to one type of discourse, whether it is natural conversation or spoken prose. Lacking exposure to different text types, learners may find it more difficult to understand one or the other. Teachers always try to ensure that my classes get both informal conversations between teacher and student and between the students themselves whereas formal spoken prose can be delivered either by them or through the use of tape and video. Lacking in cultural knowledge of the target language also presents problems for the non-native listener, as shared knowledge is important in order to be able to carry out effective predictions and utilize a top-down process to aid understanding.

McCarthy (1991) states: "Active listeners, like active readers, are constantly predicting what the message will be, based on the evidence of their real world knowledge and the type of discourse they are engaged in". We have noticed that this lack of shared cultural knowledge is often a source of difficulty for my advanced students especially because the listening texts provided for class work and exam practice are often extremely culturally biased.

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