

DEVELOPING LISTENING SKILLS IN TEACHING ENGLISH TO 5-6 GRADES CURRICULUM OF SECONDARY SCHOOLS

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Annotation

This article states some ideas to develop listening skills in teaching English to 5-6th grades curriculum of secondary schools. The author explains some criteria to improve pupils' listening skills and gives some useful advices, creates some methods.

Key words: listening, skill, teaching, method, approach, curriculum

In Teaching English to Children Scott & Ytreberg offers useful gives effective guideline to teaching English young learners. According to them, before learning to read, listening is the skill that children acquire first. Visual backup through facial expression, through movement, through mime and through picture etc. help pupils understand what they hear. It is worth remembering too that once something has been said, it disappears. The advantage of reading is that re-reading is possible and re-reading can make things clear. But this may not be possible in case of listening. Therefore, it is important to say things clearly and repeat them while children are listening. Children have very short attention span which increases with age. Eight to ten years old normally have longer attention span and they sit still for longer periods. Therefore, it is important not to overload children while they work on listening tasks. The suggested activities for young learners by Scott & Ytreberg are as follows:

Listen and do activities:

Communication is two ways, and it can be easily understood by looking at the pupil whether they have received the messages or not. In most classrooms, language is a type of "listen and do" activities, therefore teachers should make use of this from the moment they start lessons by giving genuine instruction.

Moving about:

Activities like moving about let the teachers know whether children are able to understand the instructions by listening or not. Classroom vocabulary, movement word, counting, spelling etc. can be done using activities. Children enjoy role-playing, they can role-play as an 'instructor' which will enhance speaking.

Mime stories:

Mime stories are also interesting for young learners. Here teacher tells a story and the pupils and teacher do the actions. It is again providing physical movement.

Drawing:



“Listen and draw” is a favorite type of listening activity in almost all classes, but drawing takes time, we need to keep the picture simple. In this activity the teacher or one of the pupils tells the others to draw.

Listening for information:

Listening for information’ is really an umbrella heading which covers a very wide range of listening activities. However, we are taking it to mean listening for detail, for specific information.

Putting things in order:

Pupils can be given a number of pictures, which illustrate a text in front of them. They can listen to text and put the pictures in the order they think is right.

Listen and color:

Children love coloring pictures and this can easily be a listening activity. Instead of letting them to simply color the picture teachers can make it into a language activity.

“Listen and repeat” activities:

(Rhymes, songs) ‘Listen and repeat’ exercises are great fun and give the pupils a chance to get a feel for the language: the sounds, the stress and rhyme and the intonation. When they are done in combination with movements or with objects or pictures, it helps learners to establish a link between words and meaning.

Creating stories:

Making up stories with the children at all stages helps them to put their thoughts into words. And also this gives a real feeling of a shared story and one cannot predict how it’s going to end but it does, usually rather unconventionally.

Reading stories:

The more young learners hear the better they will be able to speak. Teachers can read aloud a book instead of telling a story. Children like to have their favorite stories repeated, and they will very often be able to tell you the story word for word without changing the word. Children of all ages love to be read to, and teachers can try to spend much time to reading to them, which is a very useful listening activity.

Many pupils often encounter trouble in listening to foreign people even though they are doing well in the English classroom. Some pupils complain to teachers that, although they can understand what ALTs (Assistant Language Teachers)’ are saying because they speak slowly and clearly, they cannot understand what native English speakers are saying in real life. Why does this problem happen? What is wrong with the teaching of listening in Uzbek schools?

The first and probably the biggest problem is that, although the importance of listening skills is widely acknowledged in Japan, the adequate teaching and materials



to develop them have not been provided. In a typical listening lesson, pupils either listen just to the taped script of a reading textbook or, after listening to some materials, they answer multiple choice questions based on the content of listening materials. In this kind of lesson, correct answers are emphasized, but the listening process necessary to decode the information is ignored, and the kinds of skills and strategies for effective listening are not practiced. That is, pupils are just tested on their own ability to answer correctly and are not taught how to listen to English.

Second, the amount of time for listening lessons is limited in English I and II, compared with reading, writing, and speaking. For example, it is estimated that the average time devoted to listening activities in every class is 5 minutes per day.

Pupils are not sufficiently exposed to a variety of authentic materials, either. In short, although they are accustomed to English spoken clearly and slowly in classroom materials and can understand it, they get embarrassed and frustrated when they encounter real English which is spoken at a normal speed. Third, they are not used to the difference between spoken English and written English. Spoken English has different features such as ungrammatical utterances, false starts, hesitation, assimilation, and redundancy. If they aren't familiar with those phenomena, they may not be able to listen to English and understand it.

Lastly, in listening lessons, teachers don't have the specific notion that listening should be integrated with other skills, i.e., speaking, reading, and writing. When real world communication is examined, we never finish verbal communication appropriately without doing something after listening. For example, when we have a conversation with someone, we have to respond to him or her. It is never just one way communication. In a situation like a lecture in which pupils are listening to the instructor, they usually take notes. We can think of many other situations in which listening is integrated with the other three skills.

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