

NOTE-TAKING AS AN ACTIVE LISTENING TECHNIQUE IN TEACHING EFL LEARNERS

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ABSTRACT

This article discusses an important role of note-taking in teaching EFL learners active listening to formulate students listening skills in EFL environment. Note-taking as an active listening method of teaching and learning in which students improve their listening skills.

KEYWORDS: *Listening Comprehension, Passive Listeners, Focused Listening, Post-Listening, Note Taking.*

INTRODUCTION

Taking notes is a crucial process. It also ensures that you become an active and involved listener and learner. One of the problems of teaching EFL learners is the development of listening comprehension skills. To teach students to listen effectively is very important, since listening occupies from 45% to 53% of our communication activity (1). Then how can we ‘transform’ our students from passive listeners into active ones and make them participants of effective communication? To answer this question we should mention the following types of listening: listening for enjoyment, listening to help, and listening for information (2). The latter one is often referred to as focused listening: when we listen for a particular purpose, to find out information we need to know. Examples of this kind of listening may be listening to news or a university lecture. In these situations we listen much more closely, but we don’t listen to everything we hear with equal concentration – we listen for the most important points or for particular information. So, in class we are usually concerned with focused or active listening: we expect the students to listen closely and remember afterwards what they heard. Speaking on Where and for whom active listening may be important, we should identify different educational situations and groups of learner.

METHODS

As for Foreign Languages Department, we teach pedagogues for professional communication and the importance of active listening skills for them is quite obvious. We also deliver integrated English courses for the students of the abovementioned specialization students. The following business situations, such as telephone talks, meetings, interviews, negotiations are effective when their participants are active listeners. Active listening is a must for the students, who get an opportunity to continue their education in American or European colleges and universities, and who are to take the TOEFL or IELTS. Listening comprehension is a part of this test format. And

since high school students are generally tested on the material presented by professors during class lectures or discussions, good listening and note-taking skills become really a question of survival for them.

RESULTS

One of the major techniques for developing active listening is note-taking. Although some authors use the terms note-taking and note-making interchangeably. We distinguish between note-taking and note-making. Note-taking is a passive process which is done at lectures whereas note-making is more active and focused activity where you assimilate all information and make sense of it for yourself. F.Grellet makes a clear distinction between them in connection with summary writing. In summary writing, minor details must be deleted. Nevertheless, the summary must be an accurate and objective account of the text without reader`s reaction to it. So, if we record the information as we perceive it - we take notes; and we make notes when we write our reactions to what we perceive. Hence, note-taking quite often can be supplemented by note-making (6). Note-taking involves putting onto paper the data received through any of our senses. These data can range from simple figures, letters, symbols, words or phrases. And the decision on whether the notes are to be taken at the moment of perception or shortly afterwards depends on the complexity of the task and the ability of the notetaker. Consequently, if we are to take notes with figures, letters or single words to fill in a predesigned skeleton, we can do it at the same time we receive the information; whereas notes which require selection, summarizing and organization ought to be taken later.

Analysis: So, the question arises How to take better notes? First, we should have our own set of meaningful abbreviations and symbols. Second, when listening to a lecture of recorded material, we need to have a clear purpose and a definite sense of organization for the notes to be taken. Third, we need to anticipate the information we are going to receive and be ready to write what is really important. The fourth requirement is that students must have a reason for taking notes. The fifth requirement is to be alert to those cues that precede the information that should be noted down. You should pay attention to such signals as pauses, raising of the voice to make an important point, or using words describing a process or sequence of events (first, next, subsequently, etc.), describing the causal relationship between events (due to the fact that, because of, if, etc.). Finally, you must try and predict what will be heard (5).

DISCUSSION

In our article we shall concentrate on listening to lectures, as much has already been written about listening to a sound track on TV. The teachers of English Language Department apply this activity in training students in professional communication. We use this kind of focused listening, because we are absolutely sure that aside from developing note-taking ability, several other skills necessary for academic success are worked in a tandem:

- Processing information received orally;
- Making inferences and drawing conclusions there from;
- Becoming familiar with the various styles and accents of lectures;
- Handling objective test-taking formats (we are trying to familiarize the students with the objective test-taking formats often used in tests of listening comprehension);
- Preparing for classroom discussions and debate. When choosing the material for listening comprehension, we try and follow some criteria.

Firstly, this kind of listening must include listening preparation. The examples of pre-listening activities may be preview of content, vocabulary and sentences. Secondly, good listening exercises

must encourage both whole messages listening and listening for details. The lecture may be presented in different ways. For example, at an early stage of this skill development, students may be given a note taking model of the lecture in a skeleton form. The student listens to the lecture while looking at the model. During the second listening the student is advised to develop an individual style of note-taking that will best suit his or her individual needs. Thirdly, the lecture must provide interesting content and communicate real meaning to require listener`s response. For these reasons, post-listening activities are usually familiar multiple-choice questions or true-false statements. As for follow-up activities, we offer topics for discussions and writing which require the student to reorganize, synthesize or amplify the data given. Though some require that outside reference sources be consulted in preparing answers to the questions;

CONCLUSION

By way of conclusion, I would like to stress that as teachers we must decide what sort of help our students need for every task of listening activity we assign. Guidance provided will depend on the degree of difficulty of the task involved, but it must build up the students` confidence in their ability to listen and take notes in English simultaneously.

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