

FORMATION OF LISTENING CULTURE IN STUDENTS

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Annotation. In this article, opinions were expressed about the formation of students' listening culture.

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In terms of its planned development in schools, listening is probably the most neglected of the four language outcomes. Yet most pupils in schools spend more time on it than in any of the other three! Michael Rost, in *Introducing Listening* (Penguin English Applied Linguistics Series, 1994) emphasises the importance of listening. He says, 'When we need to understand and integrate complex information, reading may be superior. However for emotional impact, persuasion, accentuation of salient points, attitude shifts, a sense of sharing of communication events and long-term memory formation, listening may be a superior learning mode for most pupils.' Certainly throughout the school curriculum, effective listening is taken for granted as part of effective teaching and learning; in the workplace too it is necessary if we are to avoid mistakes, misunderstandings or even being misled; in our exposure to broadcasting also, we are constantly in need of it, if we are to obtain accurate information and avoid misunderstanding or exploitation. As teachers of language, therefore, we need to be aware of what is involved in effective listening, the difficulties that can arise for learners, and the strategies which they may adopt to develop their listening skills. First, it is helpful to identify four types of listening, related to different purposes: Transactional Listening, which is associated with accessing information through the spoken word, through listening to broadcast news, announcements, lectures, etc. Interactive Listening, in which we are involved in dialogue, listening to another person speaking in order to decide if and how we will react to it. Critical Listening, which involves evaluating the message, in terms of its reasoning, use of evidence, or the truth in the light of our own experience. Appreciative Listening, which involves a concentrated focus upon speech, song or music as we form a response based on our appreciation of it.

Listening effectively is an active process. It has much to do with the knowledge and experience of the listener, with motivation and involvement and with the individual situation in which listening takes place. People listen best when the information is of importance to them, when they have to take some action on it or have

the opportunity to reply or participate. Listeners, therefore, have to learn to select from what they are hearing and seeing.

Listening is most effective, then, when the listener is focused on a purpose and is actively engaged in following that purpose. Yet there are difficulties in the nature of the listening task:

It is ephemeral - unless recorded - and thus, when said, it is only recorded in the memory.

It is controlled by others. The demands made upon the listener are determined by the delivery (pace, volume, pitch, accent, voice, voice quality) and the content of the spoken text.

It is not directly assessable but only through some kind of listener response, either during or after listening.

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