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TEACHING LISTENING WITH AUTHENTIC MATERIALS

Teaching with authentic materials has been a popular topic recently. Authentic texts provide enriching experiences for language learners as they expose them to real-life language usage and contexts. Owing to easy and widespread internet access, students can find a large number of captivating authentic English texts and resources online.

Authentic materials are extremely useful in teaching listening which is a fundamental ability in the first language acquisition and integral in English as a second or foreign language learning. Krashen highlights listening as the forefront of his input hypothesis, stating that languages are acquired while understanding the message [3, p. 18]. The researcher illustrates it claiming that a child begins to speak after listening to the language of his or her parents. The process of listening is complicated and it includes creating and adapting interpretations of the world inside a linguistic context that seldom allows repetition of input. This can be challenging enough in one's first language; in a second language, it additionally needs the listener to alternate or adapt linguistic competence to be applied in the classrooms to enhance the listening comprehension of students in a secondary school.

There are many forms of materials that an instructor can use to enhance students' listening skills. These materials are divided into two major categories: authentic and non-authentic materials [1]. The latter are also referred to as scripted materials because they are edited and specially prepared for the classroom.

The advantages and disadvantages of using authentic materials in teaching listening are the focus of debate. Some state that the usage of authentic materials is more beneficial both to the learners and to the instructors as compared to the use of scripted materials. On the end of the continuum, researchers claim that it is more beneficial to use scripted materials in developing listening skills than to use authentic materials. Each of these schools of thought has justifications that they use to support their arguments.

Comparing authentic and non-authentic materials, it should be noted that course books provide listening and reading passages prepared for teachers to use according to the level of their students, whereas authentic texts could be more relevant to their interests and motivation.

Using authentic materials at English lessons has a lot of benefits, such as having a positive effect on learners' motivation, providing authentic cultural information, exposing students to real language, relating more closely to learners' needs, and supporting a more creative approach to teaching. After all, students study English for real-life situations outside the classroom. Having the abundance of authentic texts available on the Internet, a teacher does not need to search for hard copies of menus or cut-out articles from newspapers.

On the other hand, authentic texts often contain difficult language, unneeded vocabulary items, and complex language structures. That is why a teacher needs to design listening

activities to overcome these difficulties. Properly selected methods, techniques and strategies aimed at implementing authentic texts in the process of teaching English at a secondary school can solve all the problems listed.

The importance of teaching listening with authentic materials is prompted by the fact that listeners apply both bottom-up processes (linguistic knowledge) and top-down techniques (background knowledge) to comprehend [2]. This dual approach indicates a more holistic and comprehensive understanding of the material.

A listening lesson based on authentic materials should have the same stages as the lesson based on the course book has the following items:

1. Lead-in.

2. Pre-teaching the blocking vocabulary.

3. Listening to the main idea.

4. Listening for detail or specific information.

5. After-listening activities.

All the tasks must be created by the students' levels, interests and needs. The lead-in stage is needed to engage students. Next, the words should be chosen carefully for pre-teaching practice to enable the students to comprehend the content of the text and complete the tasks. The text might contain quite a lot of new vocabulary items for students, but the teacher needs to pre-teach only a few words necessary for the completion of the tasks. Pre-listening tasks may contain the following: look at the picture, guess what the recording will be about or predict the words, match the words and pictures, etc. It's also aimed at contextualizing the listening activity and activating schemata to help learners understand the track and make the process easier and more natural.

The next stage is listening for gist which contains a task that will allow the students to understand the general idea of the text, such as matching paragraphs with their headings. A short time limit is set within this task. Listening for detail or specific information stage includes tricky listening tasks. The teacher has to create questions or true/false statements that check deep understanding of the text. It might be paraphrasing, using synonyms, and paying attention to details. The teacher should know the class quite well to make the right choices of the topic, authentic texts, and words to pre-teach.

After-listening activities are important because they serve several crucial purposes:

1) comprehension check (they help ensure that listeners have understood the main points, details, and nuances of what they have heard);

2) retention (engaging in activities after listening helps reinforce memory retention of the information or content);

3) critical thinking (after-listening activities often prompt listeners to analyze, evaluate, and interpret the information they have heard);

4) language development (role plays, debates or writing tasks provide opportunities to practice vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation encountered during the listening task);

5) engagement (by participating in discussions, debates, or creative tasks, listeners remain actively involved in the learning process);

6) feedback (after-listening activities allow teachers to assess learners' comprehension, identify areas of difficulty, and provide feedback or additional support where needed; this facilitates personalized learning and improvement).

Constructive feedback is of great value. Regular feedback on listening tasks can improve students' listening skills over time. It helps students identify areas for improvement and refine their listening strategies.

In conclusion, teaching listening with authentic materials offers numerous benefits for language learners. It provides them with exposure to real-life language, helps develop their listening skills, and enhances their overall language proficiency. By following effective strategies such as selecting relevant materials, providing context, designing varied listening tasks, and integrating listening with other language skills, teachers can create engaging and meaningful listening lessons. Furthermore, encouraging learners to interact with authentic materials both inside and outside the classroom promotes autonomy and lifelong learning.

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