

JOINT LISTENING AS A WAY OF INCREASING PERCEPTION IN TEACHING A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

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Abstract. *This article presents a technique for teaching listening comprehension that combines cooperative learning with strategic learning. It assigns learners to pairs or small groups, and then gets them to cooperate in comprehending the message of a recorded speech. While listening, the learners employ some strategies and keep them in mind so they can later share them with their classmates after listening. The results of this activity are a range of strategies used by students with a variety of learning styles.*

This article also discusses the steps in the cooperative listening technique and the advantages of this approach. These new techniques focus more on training learners to utilize effective strategies for listening to spoken messages. These strategies are best learned in an environment of cooperative learning which enables students to work jointly with their classmates to comprehend spoken discourse and then benefit each other by sharing the strategies they employed during the listening.

Keywords: *cooperative learning, listening comprehension, pronunciation practice, effective strategies, spoken discourse, intermediate-level proficiency, technique, feedback, relevant, utterance.*

Cooperative learning has been part of the language learning domain for at least two decades. The approach principally aims to enhance the quality of learning by having learners cooperate in small groups or pairs. The strategies employed in cooperative learning can be powerful tools for students as they attempt to master the demanding language skill of listening comprehension.

Listening comprehension is a challenging task for teachers. The fleeting nature of sound makes it hard for listeners to focus attention on a particular word or phrase for detailed analysis. Teachers usually tend to concentrate on the product of listening when they should be interested in the process and begin their listening comprehension lessons by preparing learners for the vocabulary they will hear in the recorded material. After listening to the material the students then are required to answer some comprehension questions followed by pronunciation practice.

New ways of teaching this skill have been featured in recent years. These new techniques focus more on training learners to utilize effective strategies for listening to spoken messages. These strategies are best learned in

an environment of cooperative learning which enables students to work jointly with their classmates to comprehend spoken discourse and then benefit each other by sharing the strategies they employed during this listening. [1]

The cooperative listening technique is used for teaching a group of learners at intermediate-level proficiency in English. It should be integrated with a regular session which may be held once a week in an 18-hour listening comprehension course so as to make the listeners aware of the value of strategy exchanges for the language skill. The technique consists of the following steps:

1. The teachers divide the learners into pairs or groups of four and gives them written questions on the content of the material they are about to hear.

2. The teacher tells the learners that they are to listen to the recorded speech passage, make note of whatever they can get from it, and try their best to answer the question. The teacher tells the students to use whatever strategies they can to accomplish the task and to remember those strategies. The speech passage is then played.

3. At the conclusion of the listening session, the teacher offers the learners to share with their partners or group members any information they got from the recorded passage, including the answers to the questions. The teachers also instruct the students to tell each other what strategies they used to understand the spoken passage.

4. Each pair or group reports the results of their cooperation. The report should contain (1) the ideas they successfully got from hearing the passage and (2) the strategies they used to accomplish the listening task. The teacher may write down these the strategies on the board.

5. The teacher plays the recorded passage again to let the learners verify their answers, encourages discussion of the effectiveness of their strategies, and highlights some strategies the teacher considers effective. At this point some of the learners may be asked to give a more detailed explanation of the strategies they used so their classmates can use them as model. The discussion should be guided in such a way that less able learners can learn as much as possible from the more proficient and effective strategy users.

The cooperative listening technique offers advantages over traditional ways of listening. First, it allows weak learners to learn from more able learners how to listen strategically and what strategies are effective for comprehending spoken discourse. Second, it gives the learners opportunities to let other class members, including the teacher, know about the strategies they have been using. Finally, the feedback and comments provided help the student confirm or enhance the effectiveness of their strategies.

The major advantage of this cooperative listening technique is that it reveals a range strategy that the learners have been using. The teacher can point out that planning, for instance, is an act that prepares the learners for the upcoming task, that taking quick notes using a mind map is an example of a cognitive strategy, and that sharing information or exchanging strategies with other classmates is a kind of social strategy. The teacher may draw attention to a few strategies that comprise a series of strategic acts and gradually guide the students to start using those effective

strategies. This can be done by highlighting a series of acts that starts with students thinking about ideas relevant to the topic prior to listening, then listening to the entire utterance, and then immediately taking notes using a mind map. [2] The whole technique can be presented as following.

1. Listening carefully
2. Thinking in English
3. Using previous knowledge about the topic
4. Taking quick notes
5. Catching the key words
6. Thinking about the topic before listening to activate relevant background knowledge
7. Listening to the entire sentence, utterance, or unit of ideas before taking notes
8. Imagining the actions when asking someone for directions
9. Reading the questions first to prepare oneself for the relevant ideas in the speech
10. Taking hints from the speaker based on loudness, pitch, intonation, and speech rate.

More effective strategy can be done by showing, for instance, that the strategy of reading comprehension questions shortly before listening can alert the listeners to the relevant information in the speech that comes later.[3] The students can be told that they can listen carefully to the key words, a strategy they can prepare for the thinking about the topic prior to listening and by bringing to mind ideas related to the topic. The teacher may also facilitate the process by having the students brainstorm to arrive at the key words, an activity that helps learners activate relevant “slots” in their mind which they can later fill in with details from the listening passage.

The teacher can also explain that taking hints from the speakers’s suprasegmental features (intonation, pitch, speech rate, loudness, stress) is a strategy likely to facilitate their comprehension. An important advantage of the cooperative listening approach is the favorable learning atmosphere that ensues. When the learners gather in groups or pairs to work out the spoken messages together, the bond between them strengthens. Cooperative learning gives them

the opportunity to share their listening strategies and learn new ones from their classmates, leading to an environment conducive to learning.[5]

The cooperative listening technique compiles with the characteristics of good strategy training should be explicit, integrated into a typical classroom activity, spread over a period of time, and lead to a harmonization of strategies. All learners, proficient or not, use strategies, but they may not be adept at naming them or bringing them to their consciousness and by so doing, lets others learn from these strategies. Some strategies are specific to particular individuals; that is, not every strategy works best for all learners. The discrepancy among learners should be taken as evidence that strategies vary in effectiveness, depending on the learner. The strategy of word-by-word translation is typically used by less skilled learners. Learners using this strategy are overly concerned about individual words and take great pains to understand them in the belief that getting the meaning of every word is the key to successful listening comprehension. What usually happens is that in their effort to catch the individual words, they get overwhelmed by the speed of the speech and miss the meaning of the utterance as a whole. Through cooperative listening these learners can have the opportunity to see that their more skilled peers listen to the utterance to infer its meaning.[4] Students are clearly aware that by listening to the whole utterance rather than focusing on individual details they can infer the message and still keep up with the fast-flowing spoken information.

It should be noted that cooperative listening can reveal to less able learners the inefficiency of their word-by-word listening, the effectiveness of alternative strategies used

by more proficient classmates, and the importance of knowing the purpose of every strategy they use.

Another issue associated with cooperative listening is different learning styles and whether students with different levels can work cooperatively with each other. The learning styles of students determine their preferences for interacting with their classmates and the types of learning strategies they will employ to accomplish the tasks at hand. To avert it teachers can quickly identify students' learning preferences through a brief questionnaire at the beginning of the course.

Cooperative learning apparently give students the opportunity not only to refine their strategies through mutually beneficial exchanges of strategies, but also to adopt a new attitude toward learning as a social activity. The results of this activity are a range of strategies used by students with a variety of learning styles. The learners have the opportunity to assess the effectiveness of their own strategies, adopt other strategies to compliment theirs, and explain why they use a particular strategy.[5] The teacher can encourage the use of different types of strategies, increase the learners' awareness of having purposeful strategies, and show the students how to arrange the strategies to achieve a good result. Another advantage of this listening comprehension technique is the creation of a learning atmosphere conducive to feeling of unity among the students. Possible obstacles to this technique include the difficulty learners have verbalizing their automatic mental processes, the difference among some strategies in terms of effectiveness for different learners, and the potential incompatibility among learners with different learning preferences.

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СОВМЕСТНОЕ ПРОСЛУШИВАНИЕ КАК СПОСОБ ПОВЫШЕНИЯ ВОСПРИЯТИЯ ПРИ ОБУЧЕНИИ ИНОСТРАННОМУ ЯЗЫКУ

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Аннотация. Статья рассматривает метод обучения слушанию, который сочетает в себе совместное обучение со стратегическим обучением. Этот метод предполагает распределение студентов парами или небольшими группами, а затем предусматривает привлечение их к совместной работе в понимании (восприятии) записанной речи. Во время прослушивания студенты используют определенные стратегии и запоминают их, чтобы потом поделились ими со своими однокурсниками после прослушивания. Результатом этой деятельности является ряд стратегий, используемых студентами с различными уровнями обучения.

В этой статье затрагиваются этапы методики совместного прослушивания и преимущества этого подхода. Эти новые методы больше фиксируют внимание обучению студентов использованию эффективных стратегий для прослушивания устных сообщений. Эти стратегии лучше всего изучаются в среде совместного обучения, которая позволяет студентам совместно работать со своими однокурсниками для лучшего понимания разговорной речи с дальнейшим обсуждением примененных стратегий в процессе прослушивания, что является очень полезным для изучающих язык.

Ключевые слова: совместное обучение, восприятие речи, произношение, эффективные стратегии, разговорная речь, средний уровень знания языка, метод, отдача, соответствующий (релевантный), высказывания.