

LISTENING EXERCISE TYPES AND THE STRATEGIES USED TO ANSWER

Junaidi

Muria Kudus University

A. Introduction

English has four skills namely listening, speaking, reading and writing. Each of the skill has different way to study. We see that students may have difficulty to achieve them. The students' difficulties may involve the difficulty to learn the materials, to understand the teacher's explanation and explore the material taught by the teacher.

Brett (1995) states that listening is a key second language skill, it is vital for language acquisition, and its development is of prime concern to language teachers. As a key second of language skill, listening is the first skill should be learnt by the students. Unfortunately, the students usually study listening only in the laboratory of the school. They never study listening after they have a listening class in the language laboratory. It goes without saying that the portion of the time which is provided to study listening is so little. Actually, the students can learn listening out of the class. They can do English conversation. Unfortunately, only few of the students have willingness to do so. Moreover, the content or the topic that they discuss is not about what they learn in listening class.

Listening is the active process of receiving, constructing meaning from, and responding to spoken and/or non verbal messages. It involves the ability to retain information as well as to react emphatically and or appreciatively to spoken and/or non verbal message (ILA: 1995). The

ability to retain information is in line with how well the students can comprehend the information.

Zhang (2006) says that in the process of comprehension, listeners use both bottom-up and top-down processes to comprehend. Top down process refers to using schemata to derive meaning from interpreting the message. It refers to the attribution of meaning, drawn from one's knowledge to language input. It requires the prediction of meaning by using context clues and combining them with background knowledge. While bottom-up process refers to deriving the meaning of the text based on the incoming language data, from sounds, words, grammatical relationship, to meaning.

In addition, Byrnes (1984) characterizes listening comprehension as a highly complex problem-solving activity that can be broken down into a set of distinct sub-skills. Providing an activity such as giving exercise is the best way to check the students' comprehension in studying listening. A lot of exercises are provided by the teachers as the part of activities which will be done by the students in listening class. The teacher leads the students to finish the exercises by giving some instructions. Guideline sometime is given to the students in order to make them easier to finish the exercises. To talk more about exercise, this paper tries to discuss about the types of exercises in listening and what are the strategies to answer the exercise.

B. Discussion

Having experience for about five years teaching listening in university, the writer is very interested in studying more about listening. The writer knows that it is not an easy task to teach listening for the students. By writing this paper, the writer tries to share about listening exercises which he found in listening book. Listening skill are taught implicitly throughout each unit. For example, the comprehension exercises are designed to give practice in such listening skills as predicting,

identifying main ideas and details, and note taking (Ferree, T and Kim Sanabria: 2004).

Referring to Ferree, T and Kim Sanabria, the writer suggests that the type of exercises which is utilized in the class should build and measure the students' ability in listening skill.

The following are the listening exercise types in listening class:

1. Pronunciation

Instruction: Hearing the difference between /θ/, /s/, and /t/. Listen to the following words. Circle the words you hear.

- | | | | | | |
|---------|-------|--------|----------|-------|--------|
| 1. tank | sank | thank | 6. tie | sigh | thigh |
| 2. tin | sin | thin | 7. mat | mass | math |
| 3. pat | pass | path | 8. tent | tense | tenth |
| 4. tick | sick | thick | 9. eight | ace | eighth |
| 5. fort | force | fourth | 10. bet | bess | beth |

(taken from Blass, L and Pamela Hartmann: 2007)

Pronouncing word is the basic exercise of listening. This exercise trains the students to differentiate the sound of each word spoken by the speaker. Students will have difficulty when they have to choose the words which are closely similar to pronoun. To do this exercise the student should listen to the sound of the words spoken clearly. Having a lot of exercises and remembering the pronunciation of the words will help the students to be familiar how to pronounce some words in spoken language.

2. Choosing corrected word from the option

Instruction: Listen to the conversation. Choose the correct words.

- Tony : Well, I brought some photos of my ^{1(a)} friends (b) family with me. I want to show ^{2(a)} them to you (b) you to them.
- HSF : Wow, you brought lots of photos. Great!
- Tony : Here's the first one.
- HSF : Let me see. Oh, what a nice family. Is ^{3(a)} she your mother (b) he your bother?
- Tony : Yes, ^{4(a)} he's my brother (b) she's my mother.
- HSF : And who's in the ^{5(a)} seventh (b) second picture?
- Tony : Oh, this is my grandmother.
- HSF : Does ^{6(a)} she live with you (b) she look like you?
- Tony : Yep. She ^{7(a)} looks like us (b) lives with us.
- HSF : How about in this picture? ^{8(a)} Who are (b) Where are the girls?
- Tony : Well, the one ^{9(a)} on the right (b) to the right is Carla – she's my sister.
- HSF : And the one on the left is who?
- Tony : Um, that's Ellen. She's also my ... sister.
- HSF : Oh?
- Tony : And in this picture, this is Lenny and Marty. ^{10(a)} They're (b) There my brothers.
- HSF : Wait a minute. How many brothers and sister do you have?
- Tony : Well, it's ^{11(a)} a little hard (b) a little far to follow, but I'll explain. This is my mother... and this is my mother's husband, Evan.
- HSF : That's your father?
- Tony : No, he's not my father. My mother and father are divorced. And, Evan is also divorced.
- HSF : OK.
- Tony : And he married my ^{12(a)} brother (b) mother last year.
- Tony : He has two children, also, one boy and one girl. Marty and Ellen. So, actually, Marty is my step-brother and Ellen is my ^{13(a)} step-sister (b) step-brother.

HSF : Step-brother and step-sister?

Tony : Yeah. That means, my mother isn't their mother, but my mother¹⁴(a) is married (b) isn't married to their father.

HSF : Oh, it's a little hard to follow.

Tony : Well, it really doesn't matter now. We all just live together and¹⁵(a) where a happy family (b) we're a family.

(taken from Kislinger, E: 2002)

This exercise asks the students to guess corrected words to complete the excerpt. The students do the exercise by choosing the option directly while they are listening to the audio. The rapidity and the accuracy to catch the audio will lead them to select the right option as written in the text.

3. Marking each sentence T (true) or F (false)

Instruction: Listen to the excerpt. Mark each sentence T (true) or F (false)

- _____ 1. In the morning of the hurricane, the sky was dark and it was raining very hard.
- _____ 2. By mid-afternoon, the winds turned violent and a wall of water rolled in from the sea to the shore.
- _____ 3. People were repeatedly warned of the hurricane by weather forecasters but choose to stay in the area.
- _____ 4. The hurricane caused a flood that destroyed lives and property.

(taken from Ferree, T and kim Sanabria: 2004)

In predicting skill, the student is trained to predict the answer by marking each sentence *true* or *false*. To do this exercise, the student must be able to understand the main statements as the question. The statements are in line with what the students listen to the audio. Background knowledge of the students about hurricane is not needed to do the exercise. The exact information from the audio is the source of the information to answer the exercises. In this exercise, the ability of the students to check the accuracy of the statement which is written as

question is very important to have while they are listening to and comprehending to the audio.

4. Correcting word

Instruction: Listen to the excerpt again. Then read the sentences. The underlined words are incorrect. Write the correct words.

1. People called their friends to come and watch the sunset.

2. People sat outside on their lawns.

3. People watched in delight as a wall of water rolled in.

4. Some of the houses fell down when the water hit.

(taken from Ferree, T and kim Sanabria: 2004)

The exercises above train the students to identify the meaning of the full sentences by replacing incorrect words. In other words, this exercise asks the students to replace incorrect word which is underlined in the sentences. The strategies be used for the following exercise is that the students may read all the sentences and comprehend the full meaning of the sentences. After identifying the meaning of the sentences, the students can replace the incorrect words while listening to the excerpt.

The following is other example of correcting error of words.

Instruction : Listen to the conversation. Correct the errors in the script.

Dr. Monroe : Welcome to Ask the Doctor.

I'm Dr. Helen Monroe, here this morning to help you with your health problems. Lets' talk to the first caller. Hello, you're on the air.

Caller 1 : Hello. My problem is sunburn. I fell asleep in the sun. Now I have a red sunburn. Really bad. My skin is red and hot. I can't eat. I can't sleep. I feel terrible. What should I do?

Dr. Monroe : For a bad sunburn, drink a lot of tea. Stay in a cool, quiet room. Rest. And, of course, go outside in the sun. Eat cool foods like ice-cream and drink cold juice. Now on to our next caller.

Caller 2 : My problem is I can't sleep at night. Every day I can't fall asleep. So I'm always awake.

Dr. Monroe : If you can't sleep, don't take sleep medicine. It doesn't really help you. Instead, try to get some exercise every night. Swim, play tennis, dance ... perhaps take a walk. Secondly, don't have a lot of alcohol or coffee. Especially coffee. It's loaded with caffeine that will wake you up. Third, try seeing something VERY BORING. A boring book can help you go right to sleep! Now on to our next caller.

(taken from Kislinger, E: 2002)

This exercise asks the student to recognize incorrect words written in the text. The students have to look for incorrect word by listening to the audio attentively and reading the text at the same time. This time the students investigate the accuracy of the words written in text with the speaker words from the audio. The words which are not mention by the speaker should be replaced.

5. Finding main idea

Instruction: listen to the excerpt. Circle the sentence that best expresses the main idea.

1. a. Residents in Truro have had to think of new ways to disposes of their trash.
b. Residents in Truro have had to start paying to dispose of their trash.
2. a. Residents are now burning and burying trash in landfills in eastern Massachusetts.

- b. Residents are recycling and reusing what was once thought of as trash.
- 3. a. recycling is popular among the town's residents.
- b. Recycling is expensive.

(taken from Ferree, T and kim Sanabria: 2004)

This exercises trains the students to summary the content of the excerpt. Reading the option first before listening to the excerpt is suggested to do for getting the right answer. The students' comprehension of interpreting the meaning of the option given will lead them to decide the main idea when they are listening to the excerpt. The main idea is the topic in which the speaker has said or being discussed in the form of some utterances.

6. Finding words meaning based on the context.

Instruction: Listen to the sentences. Circle the meaning of the words you hear.

1. a. nervous b. sleepy c. quiet
2. a. surge b. supply c. failure
3. a. easily seen b. easily hurt c. easily heard
4. a. instructions b. directions c. supplies
5. a. to feel sudden hunger
- b. to feel a sudden sadness
- c. to feel sudden fear
6. a. technologically advanced
- b. medically tested
- c. artistically done
7. a. moving to a safer place
- b. moving to a smaller place
- c. moving to a dangerous place
8. a. to label extra supplies
- b. to buy or save extra supplies
- c. to list extra supplies

9. a. presentation b. preview c. prediction
10. a. very difficult b. very dangerous c. very important.

(taken from Ferree, T and kim Sanabria: 2004)

This exercise needs the students to guess the meaning of certain words spoken by the speaker more than once. To get the right answer, the students should interpret the utterances based on the context. The similar meaning of the words from the option is the synonym of the word which is asked by the speaker.

7. completing sentence

Instruction: Listen to the sentences. Circle the adjective form that correctly completes each sentence.

1. a. amazed b. amazing
2. a. heartened b. heartening
3. a. frightened b. frightening
4. a. surprised b. surprising

(taken from Ferree, T and kim Sanabria: 2004)

This exercise asks the students to complete uncompleted sentences. The ability of the students to know the class words is very important to have. By considering the structure of the sentences, the students will be easier to complete the sentences.

8. Taking note to fill in the blanks.

Instruction: Listen to Roberta describes her frightening dream. Fill in the blank.

I had a terrible dream last week. And now I'm very worried and don't know what to do. In my dream, I'm driving my car. It's a dark night, and it's 1 _____ very hard. I worked hard all day. But I'm late for a 2 _____ in another city, so I cannot stop to rest. I must keep driving. I want to sleep.

Then I woke up. I was 3 _____, and my head hurt. The next night I had the same dream. I'm driving my car, late for a meeting, and it's raining. This time, I'm driving very fast on a dangerous road, with many hills and curves. I want to sleep. I don't know the road, and I'm worried about having an 4 _____. When I woke up, again I was scared, and my head hurt. The dream returned the next night. Again, I'm very 5 _____, I'm driving fast because I'm late, it's raining, and I don't know the road. This time I have a terrible accident. I 6 _____ another car. I dreamed I 7 _____ in the accident. I woke up shaking I was so afraid. Now, I have a problem. I have to take a 8 _____ trip next week. I have to drive my car to another city. But I'm worried. I think my dream will come true. I think I might have an accident and die. What should I do?

(taken from R. Day Richard and Junko Yamanaka, 1999)

The last exercise is taking note to fill in the blanks. The students have to fill in the blank by using a word or phrases which is exactly spoken by the speaker. There is nothing to do in this exercise except they have to listen to the audio attentively and find the words which have been said by the speaker. Paying full attention in listening to the audio will help them to do the exercises although the speaker speaks very fast.

C. Conclusion

To end this paper, the writer may conclude that there are so many form of listening exercise types which may be used for the teacher in listening class. The ability of the teacher to choose the exercises which match with the purpose and the competence of the study is very important to succeed the process of teaching and learning in listening class.

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