

## Listening Comprehension & Learners' Enthusiasm

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**Abstract:** It presents a detailed report of a project implemented to solve the problem that most of my students have difficulties in their English listening. It is hypothesized that learners' enthusiasm in listening either in class or out of class will be greatly increased by a better comprehension in this respect.

**Key words:** listening comprehension; problems; enthusiasm; practicality

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### 1 Introduction

I have been teaching the students who are in their first year of a vocational school. In my teaching I have found there are listening problems. It is not easy to improve the students' listening level in a short time, and it needs a long process of training. I hope I can solve the problems that have troubled me for some time through the research of listening so that I can apply my knowledge and theory into practice.

### 2 Summary of the Preliminary Research

#### 2.1 Problem

The problem is that most of my students have difficulties in their listening. My preliminary research confirmed that there were four reasons that accounted for students' trouble in listening. Firstly, their limited knowledge of English prevent them from gaining understanding of the listening materials. Some of them said: "if I come across a new word, I stop to think about its meaning and so miss the next part of the speech." Secondly, some students were short of enough enthusiasm in listening, they hoped the teacher would offer them more opportunities of listening practice in order that they would be gradually interested in listening. Thirdly, most of students didn't know how to listen the English

language, that is, they knew little about the listening skills. Fourthly, a couple of students even thought listening course was just like a lullaby, and they said whenever they wore the earphone, they would feel sleepy, so they asked the teacher to help them change the bad habits of listening.

#### 2.2 Questionnaire survey

I made a pilot investigation in this respect to know more about the situation. For this purpose, I designed a research procedure in listening comprehension. Once in April, I asked them to listen a story from "许国璋《英语》" book II, lesson 5, titled "A HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER", meanwhile, they were required to note down the gist they heard. After class, when I checked the paper, I found: Most of the total 40 students hadn't caught the main idea. Among the others, some students got incomplete information; A few felt sleepy as soon as they heard English sounds, and naturally, the sleepy ones noted nothing.

Through the interview with the students of different levels, I understood those who had caught the main idea liked English very much, and they usually spent their spare time on speaking and listening practice, they not only listened carefully the teacher's lecture in class but also did listening practice by tape, video, MP4, pair-work, dialogue, conversation, etc. Those who got incomplete information said they hadn't done much more listening practice out of class, and were short of relevant knowledge of listening skills; those sleepy

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ones thought they had no interest in listening foreign language, they could not catch the meaning of a sentence or even a phrase or an expression. Some of them believed that listening was not important and unnecessary. As time went on, they gradually lost enthusiasm and heart about listening.

### 2.3 Project objective

The research objective is to enhance my students' listening enthusiasm either in class or out of class. The solutions listed as follows: ① Identify listening purposes and listening skills; ② Provide them suitable materials and topics that are close to real-life and closely relate to my purpose of practicing listening; ③ Check their performance regularly; ④ Create as much more listening practice chances as possible for them; ⑤ Develop listening competition.

## 3 Full-Scaled implementation of the solutions

### 3.1 Provide materials

In order to make it sure that the students could do listening better, I provided them with a lot of materials for help, including cassette tapes, video tapes, DVD dishes, etc. Whenever they watched English program on TV, I would ask them to listen, and retell me what they had heard. The students are young, they have strong desire of seeking knowledge and novelty. They hope to express what they are interested in, but they can only listen a little English words. Moreover, the students are not satisfied with the tape-script of the reading-text. So I must select more interesting listening materials for them. But if the listening materials I selected for them are too hard to understand or uninteresting at all, that would dampen the enthusiasm of the students. Based on this situation, I primarily organized the students to listen some easier dialogues, and chose such basic materials as “英语听力入门” Book I — “STEP BY STEP”, “许国璋《英语》”, “Family Album U.S.A.” video series

story, “English 900”, “Contemporary College English (Listening 1)”, “致用英语 A Listening Course” etc.

### 3.2 Check listening comprehension

It was necessary for me to check students' listening practice regularly. It was under the supervision of teachers that the students' listening level made greater progress. Sometimes I let them do some multiple choice while hearing on the tape. Sometimes I checked the main idea they got by listening a passage. The purpose of checking was to make sure whether the students' ability of listening comprehension had improved or not.

## 4 Listening Practice Design

The hypothesis is that learners' enthusiasm either in class or out of class is improved by a better comprehension with skills. Comprehension procedures are divided into several stages, and each stage shows one aspect of listening. When a stage is finished, the students should reach a certain level called stage purpose.

## 5 Data Analysis

After four weeks' listening research, I designed the second questionnaire so that comparisons could be made to see the improvement. In designing this new questionnaire, I also used feedback information from my solutions to the problems discussed so that their effectiveness could be reflected by the results. I was more conscious of the usefulness of the listening comprehension training I organized. I especially hoped to know what my students had gained and which skills they preferred.

The results are chiefly shown below:

The project consists of three aspects: degree of enthusiasm, practicality and satisfaction. Through comparing the results of the two questionnaires, I found out that students' listening levels had been improved a lot after the implementation.

## 6 Enthusiasm

The result shows that there is a drastic improvement in this regard. Most of the subjects who had “highest” and “high” enthusiasm amount to 71.6%, while the percentage was only 44.3% before the implementation. As the objective of our research is to enhance my students’ enthusiasm in doing listening practice, such a result is very encouraging. It proves that our implementation of the solution is fruitful and effective. Practicality:

Now all the students think listening comprehension practices I led them to do are more practical than before. The results show that they have made greater progress in the following aspects: 82.2% of them said they could catch the main idea of the texts, a short story or a dialogue in listening; 80.7% of them said they had learned some skills of listening; 86.6% of them said they could retell a short sentence after the speaker; 67.3% of them said they could pick out the specific numbers or the telephone numbers after listening the tape—scripts or a speaker.

## 7 Conclusion

The project that I proceeded from May, 2012 to April, 2013 chiefly aim to enhance my

students’ enthusiasm in doing listening practice. From the data, I think the ways used are all practical. Now I can be very happy to say that my problem has been successfully solved. I will go on with another research to get more successful and valuable experiences to help my students and make them conduct their listening practice with higher enthusiasm. This is the ultimate aim I have been expecting in this listening project.

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# 外语学习中听力理解与学生积极性的提高

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**摘要:** 本文对学生在英语听力方面存在的诸多问题及如何解决进行了研究, 提出了较详尽全面的研究报告。实践证明, 采用这些方法有效地提高了学生的学习积极性。

**关键词:** 听力理解; 问题; 积极性; 实践