

## LISTENING APPROACHES IN TEFL - ΠΑΠΑΔΟΠΟΥΛΟΣ ΝΙΚΟΛΑΟΣ, Μ.Εd. – ΜΠΑΝΤΗ ΔΕΣΠΟΙΝΑ

The present poster delves into the effective teaching of listening skill and the most appropriate approaches that EFL instructors and EFL learners can adopt in order to achieve better learning outcomes.

**TEACHING THE LISTENING SKILL**

Effective instruction of listening should include learners' preparation about the content, setting targets, visual support as well as a risk-free learning environment, explanation of the assessment criteria, shared feedback, and reflection (Balaban, 2015).

**Teachers should**

1. facilitate the activation of content schemata, which can be triggered through **visuals, and discussion** (Othman & Vanathas, 2004),
2. take into consideration that children's listening comprehension and development of particular micro-skills rely heavily on the **context**,
3. adjust selected features such as topic, grammatical complexity, and rate of delivery through the **use of simpler and shorter sentences, slow speech, and repetitions**,
4. design purposeful tasks on the basis of **learners' level of language proficiency, age, needs and interests** in order to enhance comprehensible input (Richards, 1983),
5. provide diagnosis of **error patterns**, along with **positive feedback and remedial action**,
6. cater for the obstacles that EFL learners possibly have to tackle while processing the auditory input. These challenges can be attributed to the complication of the process itself, the **speakers** and the **listeners' motives, the text content and the visual aids** accompanying the message (Vandergrift, 2004).
7. keep in mind that listening input is an ephemeral circumstance for language acquisition (Vandergrift, 2007).

**LISTENING APPROACHES****PRODUCT AND PROCESS APPROACHES**

**Product approach:** Listening to acquisition is related to the enhancement of language acquisition and the facilitation of language development. Learners follow the speakers' speech rate in order to provide the **unique**

**correct answer** to listening comprehension activities. The focus on the right answer allows the verification of listeners' comprehension, but it can create a feeling of **testing**, can make students feel a high level of anxiety (Arnold, 2000). It involves learners' concentration on **lexis, grammar, and structure**.

The perspective of **listening as comprehension** (Richard, 2008) emphasises the **message** rather than on form and the ways the meaning of these messages can be accessed. **The process approach** urges learners to practice specific ways of listening, and introduces them to **real life listening** (Vandergrift, 2003a). The use of authentic materials and strategies instruction are necessary. Teachers can employ real life topics, such as **advertisements, weather forecast, and films reviews**.

**BOTTOM-UP AND TOP-DOWN APPROACHES**

The **bottom-up approach** views listening as a linear, data-driven process during which learners attempt to assign meaning to the incoming speech by decoding spoken texts successfully (Nunan, 2002). Learners employ lower-level processes and pay attention to **sounds, words, phrases, sentence boundaries, and contractions**.

The **top-down approach** favours the active **construction of meaning** based on listeners' expectations, inferences, intentions, and prior knowledge. Instructors involve learners in real-life listening by designing communicative tasks that promote **interaction** with native speakers and raise **metacognitive awareness** about listening (Mendelsohn, 2001).

**INTENSIVE AND EXTENSIVE LISTENING**

Learners' guidance towards **intensive listening** contributes to the development of their bottom-up processing skills. Listeners' concern is to process the **form** of the language, to focus on **phonemes, syllables, words and sentence stress, intonation, and syntactic parsing**.

**Extensive listening:** Comprehension tasks focus on **meaning**, expose learners to large amounts of comprehensible language input, assist them to face their listening difficulties, and are completed at the post-listening stage. **Vocabulary knowledge, accent recognition**, and productive skills, such as **pronunciation and speaking** can be developed (Northall, 2017).