www.wordlyknowledge.uz Volume: 2, Issue: 2, 2023

Developing listening and vocabulary skills to adult learners

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Abstract: The journey of adult learners in acquiring a new language is a unique and enriching experience, often driven by diverse motivations. Two key components critical to language acquisition are developing listening skills and expanding vocabulary. This article explores effective strategies and methodologies to empower adult learners in honing these fundamental skills, fostering linguistic proficiency and confidence.

Key words: Fundamental skills, linguistic proficiency, learning preferences, learning experiences.

Introduction: Developing active listening skills is essential for personal and professional development. Moreover, listening is a skill that can be taught, as it can improve communication, foster empathy, and promote understanding. Teachers can use body language as well to help students learn communication at a distance. Whether it's communication with their eyes, tone of voice, or body movements, children begin to mimic or understand these often-subtle expressions of communication to develop their own form of expressing their ideas and feelings. Listening is an active process by which we make sense of, assess, and respond to what we hear. The listening process involves five stages: receiving, understanding, evaluating, remembering, and responding. These stages will be discussed in more detail in later sections. Understanding Adult Learning Dynamics. Adult learners come to language acquisition with varied backgrounds, experiences, and learning preferences. Recognizing the individuality of adult learners is essential when designing strategies to enhance listening and vocabulary skills. Unlike younger learners, adults often bring a wealth of knowledge and real-world experiences, which can be leveraged to create meaningful and relevant language learning experiences.

Engaging Authentic Materials. Introducing adult learners to authentic materials, such as podcasts, interviews, or TED Talks, provides exposure to real-life language usage. Authentic materials expose learners to diverse accents, colloquial expressions, and varying speech speeds, thereby enhancing their listening comprehension skills. Focused Listening Activities. Incorporating focused listening activities is crucial for developing the ability to understand spoken language. These activities may include listening for specific information, identifying main ideas, or recognizing tone and mood.

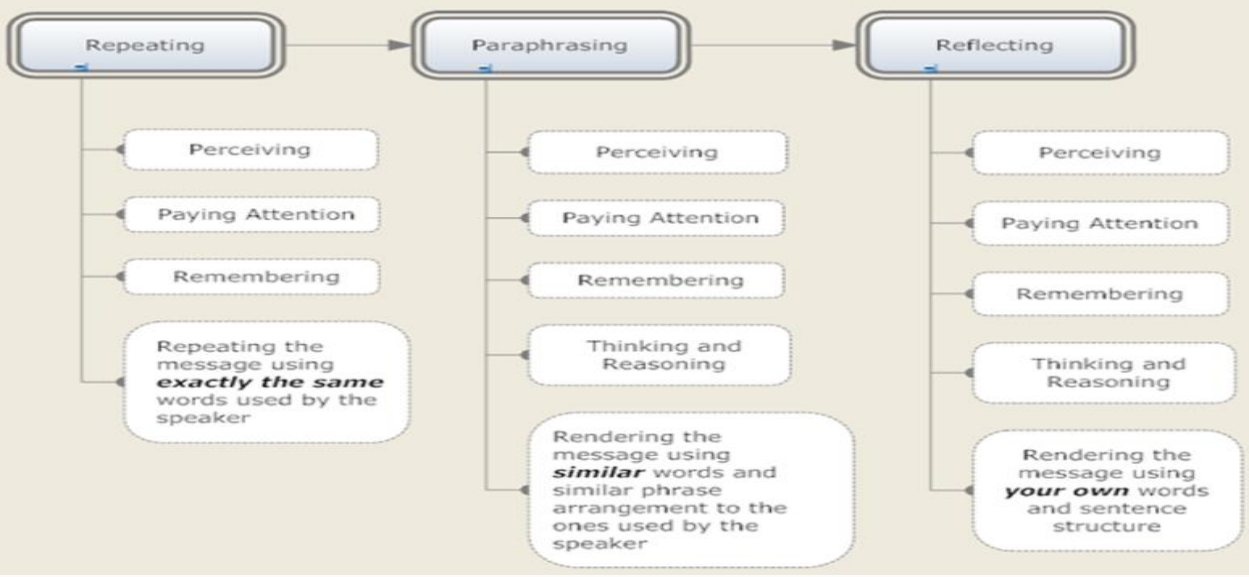
Figure 1. Degrees of active listening

Vocabulary Expansion Through Context. Learning vocabulary in context is highly effective for adult learners. Instead of rote memorization, contextual learning involves exposing learners to words within sentences, paragraphs, or conversations. By gradually increasing the complexity of listening tasks, adult learners can build confidence and competence in understanding varied contexts. This approach not only enhances vocabulary but also aids in understanding word usage and nuances. Utilizing Technology. Integrating technology into language learning can be a game-changer for adult learners. Language learning apps, interactive online platforms, and multimedia resources provide a dynamic and engaging environment for practicing listening skills

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and expanding vocabulary. These tools often offer flexibility, allowing learners to tailor their learning experiences. Interactive Conversational Practice. Creating opportunities for interactive conversations is crucial for honing both listening and vocabulary skills. Pairing or grouping learners for discussions, debates, or role-playing activities promotes active engagement and reinforces language usage in practical scenarios. Listening is used to receive and comprehend communications, while speaking is used to communicate using spoken or oral language. These skills are necessary for everyday conversation but also important components of education. Speaking and listening are crucial in most careers, as well.

The listening process involves five stages: receiving, understanding, evaluating, remembering, and responding. These stages will be discussed in more detail in later sections. An effective listener must hear and identify the speech sounds directed toward them, understand the message of those sounds, critically evaluate or assess that message, remember what's been said, and respond (either verbally or nonverbally) to information they've received. Cognitively Challenging Exercises. Designing cognitively challenging exercises helps stimulate the adult learner's mind. This could involve solving puzzles, deciphering complex texts, or engaging in word games. Challenging activities not only expand vocabulary but also enhance cognitive functions related to language processing. Encouraging Extensive Reading. Encouraging adult learners to engage in extensive reading exposes them to a wide range of vocabulary and language structures. Reading books, articles, or news in the target language contributes to a more nuanced understanding of context and usage, thereby enriching both listening and vocabulary skills. Active listening is a particular communication technique that requires the listener to provide feedback on what he or she hears to the speaker, by way of restating or paraphrasing what they



have heard in their own words. Language learners do not learn most of their words by looking them up in a dictionary. Rather, they learn them in the context of their experience with listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Vocabulary development is a lifetime undertaking in which schools play a critical role in enriching and extending the students' basic lexical repertoire, particularly through the medium of written language. The objective of the present study was to use systematic direct vocabulary instruction based on children's rhymes, and songs to enhance adult English language learners' vocabulary comprehension skills, such as identifying the word that belongs to a different category, classifying words according to their general or specific category, recognizing different categories, identifying roots, prefixes, and suffixes, recognizing parts of speech: nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, prepositions, pronouns, etc., recognizing the

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synonyms in a given list of words, recognizing the antonyms in a given list of words and vocabulary production skills, such as suggesting words that belong to different given categories, giving names of categories that describe given lists of words, building new words from given letters, building words by adding affixes, forming new words from given words by rearranging the letters, providing the synonyms of given words, and providing the antonyms of given words. The goal of this repetition is to confirm what the listener has heard and to confirm the understanding of both parties. The ability to actively listen demonstrates sincerity, and that nothing is being assumed or taken for granted. Active listening is most often used to improve personal relationships, reduce misunderstanding and conflicts, strengthen cooperation, and foster understanding. According to Supharatypthin (2014), listening is "receiving language through one's ears, and it involves identifying the sounds of speech and processing these sounds into words and sentences that will be converted into messages that mean something to listeners (p. 142). It is one of the four language skills learners of any language are expected to develop when learning a foreign language. Together with reading, listening is a receptive skill which has been often left untrained since the focus of language teaching methods and approaches has been the productive skills of speaking and written. According to Nunan (2002), learners demonstrate knowledge and proficiency in a language by speaking and writing in the language, so listening and reading become secondary; in other words, these two skills are the means to certain ends but are not ends themselves (p. 238). Over time, training students to help them develop strong listening skills has become more important, so students could become fluent speakers in English.

Conclusion: Developing listening and vocabulary skills in adult learners is a multifaceted process that requires a thoughtful combination of strategies and methodologies. Recognizing the unique characteristics of adult learners and tailoring language learning experiences to their needs fosters a more effective and enjoyable journey. As adult learners progress in their language acquisition endeavors, the enhancement of listening and vocabulary skills not only contributes to linguistic proficiency but also empowers them to communicate with confidence in a variety of real-world situations. Ultimately, the commitment to creating a supportive and engaging learning environment ensures that adult learners embark on a fulfilling and successful language learning journey.

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