

TEACHING ENGLISH THROUGH LISTENING TO ESP STUDENTS

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Annotation: English for Specific Purposes (ESP) is a branch of English language education that focuses on teaching English tailored to specific academic or professional fields. Listening comprehension plays a crucial role in ESP instruction as it enables students to access authentic materials, understand domain-specific terminology, and engage in real-life communicative situations. This article explores effective methods for teaching English through listening in ESP contexts and offers practical strategies for educators.

Key words: focus, acquisition, authentic, tailored, specific, podcast, handouts

1. Introduction

Listening is a fundamental skill in language acquisition, particularly for students studying English for Specific Purposes (ESP). Unlike general English learners, ESP students require language proficiency in specific fields such as medicine, engineering, law, or business. Therefore, teaching listening in ESP requires a focused approach that integrates domain-specific content and real-world communication patterns.

Importance of Listening in ESP

ESP students often encounter English in professional or academic audio materials—lectures, podcasts, interviews, or conversations. Developing listening skills:

- Enhances comprehension of specialized vocabulary
- Prepares learners for real-life scenarios in their careers
- Encourages autonomous learning through media and technology
- Facilitates integration into global professional communities

Selecting Appropriate Listening Materials

Effective listening instruction in ESP begins with the selection of relevant materials. These should be:

- Authentic (e.g., conference talks, industry reports, job interviews)
- Relevant to the field (e.g., medical podcasts for healthcare professionals)
- Adaptable to learner levels

Examples of sources include:

- TED Talks on specific industries
- VOA or BBC Learning English special reports

- Industry-specific YouTube channels

- Recorded lectures or seminars

Teaching Strategies

4.1 Pre-listening Activities

Before engaging with the audio material, teachers should:

- Introduce key vocabulary and concepts
- Encourage predictions based on the topic
- Discuss learners' prior knowledge

3. While-listening Activities

These focus on developing specific skills:

- Listening for gist or main ideas
- Identifying specific details or terminology
- Recognizing discourse markers and transitions

4. Post-listening Activities

After listening, students should be encouraged to:

- Summarize the content in their own words
- Engage in discussions or debates
- Complete vocabulary exercises
- Create follow-up questions or role-plays

5. Integrating Technology

Modern tools and platforms enhance listening instruction:

- Edpuzzle allows interactive video lessons
- Subtitled videos aid comprehension and support language acquisition
- Speech recognition software supports pronunciation and feedback
- Mobile apps like BBC Learning English, Listenwise, and FluentU offer field-specific listening content

6. Assessment and Feedback

Assessment should be ongoing and formative. Suggested methods include:

- Listening comprehension quizzes
- Reflective journals on listening practices
- Oral presentations summarizing audio content
- Peer and teacher feedback on listening-based task

Conclusion

Teaching English through listening is a powerful approach in ESP education. It helps bridge the gap between academic or professional requirements and language proficiency. By integrating relevant materials, interactive methods, and appropriate technologies, educators can significantly enhance their students' listening skills and overall language competence.

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