EFL PODCASTING : HOW TO ASSEMBLE STUDENTS LISTENING COMPREHENSION

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Abstract

Most EFLstudents view listening as demanding skill. They get many problems to comprehend oral text in EFL listening classroom. The fact that listening skill does not receive as muct attention as the other skill can not be neglected. Some effort should be done to solve this problem. Using EFL podcasting is one of the way to overcome these problems. This paper will discuss how to assembe students listening comprehension by using EFL Podcasting since EFL podcasting give challenges and opportunities for the students to improve their listening from certain websites. It is digital recording or radio broadcast that publish on the internet as MP3 files. The advent of podcast on the internet has given a goldmine of material for teaching listening skill.

Key words: Listening Comprehension, EFL Podcast.

Introduction

*L*istening still viewed as demanding skill by EFL students since they have to activate their background knowledge and linguistic competence at the same time. There are many effort should be done by ESL teachers to improve students listening comprehesnion. One of them is providing material for the students that can be accessed every time and every where easily using internet technology. That is ESL Podcasting. It has given a goldmine of material for teaching and learning of listening comprehension.

Podcastsare audio programs on the web which are usually updated at regular intervals. A podcast can be uploaded automatically to your computer using RSS (really simple syndication), podcatchingsoftware. It can cover a wide range of topics and can include music and video. It can last anything upwards of a few minutes to an hour or more. Podcasts are popular for their authentic the natural speech as by the native speakers. Podcast directories are best place to start looking for podcasts. The authentic podcasts ranging from vocabulary practice to idiomatic expressions to phrasal verbs togeneral English are easily available in plenty at podcast directories. Learners can click on a category and scroll through listened to on the computer, or download to an MP3 player or iPod for later listening. Another example of a general podcast directory is http://www.podcatalley.com/. More advanced learners can be encouraged to listen to authentic podcasts. This web-based environment effectively narrows the gap between

the formal English which dominates most second language classroom and the informal English used in most real –life communication events. ELT podcasts cover a wide range of subject matter such as: Podcasts based on comprehension activities, interviews and vocabulary.Podcasts based on idiomatic expressions with their usages.Podcasts containing conversations between the native speakers. Podcasts based on that encourage careful listening by the learners. Accompanied by the text of the lyrics. Podcasts containing vocabulary with their pronunciation. Story-based podcasts followed by listening comprehension questions. In addition to provide the extra listening practice, teachers can also create their own podcasts or guide their students to produce their own. With the advent of information and communication technology, it is now easy for teachers and students to produce podcasts. This follows the simple procedure explained below to help them produce their own podcasts: Using a free podcast site like Podomatic (www.podomatic.com), the teacher can set up a podcast page. The podcast page provides a website for learners to post their podcasts. To record a podcast, the teacher needs a computer and Internet connection, and a microphone and speakers or a headset. Podcast sites are extremely easy to use and no specialist technical knowledge is needed. Indeed, learners get full of the expressions as well as their usages in different contexts. Therefore, the learners must also be encouraged to create their own podcasts. For this, they could be given short text to prepare and rehearse. Knowing the important of podcast for teaching listening, This paper presents the way to assembe students listening comprehension through Podcast

What is Listening Comprehension

There have been a number of attempts to define the listening skill in the literature. For instance, Nunan (2003: 4) defines that listening as "the active process to make sense". Furthermore Brown (2004:) states "listening as a component of speaking". He said that someone should improve his/her listening skill before mastering speaking skill. Howat and Dakin in Guo and Wills (2005:2) support Nunan and Brown opinion. They defines"listening as the ability to know and understand what the speaker said". He explained that the listener need to process the message and they have to connect it to another information they already know.

Moreover, Rost (2002:3) claims that listening is "equal experiencing contextual effect, that is listening a neurological event (experiencing) overlays a cognitive events, that is creating a change in a representation. Rost (2002) also stresses that listening goes through a process in which the listener gets what, in fact, the speaker says, representing and structuring meaning, establishing a negotiation in meaning (with the speaker), giving response, building up meaning with the help of involvement, empathy and imagination.

Furthermore Listening comprehension is important when the listeners need to gain the message from the speaker. Without comprehension, the listeners will not understand well that the speakers are saying. The listener cannot do if she/ he does not listen carefully, concentrate on and pay attention to what the speaker say.

Comprehension is a main part of listening skill since comprehension is understanding message deeply. While listening something, listener needs to acquire the message well.

According to Magnera (2010:12), listening comprehension refers to the understanding of the implications and explicit meanings of words and sentences of spoken language.

Listening comprehension is necessary to understand for the students. According to Fang (2010:15)," listening comprehension means that the listeners should be encouraged to concentrate on an active process of listening for meanings, using not only the linguistic cues but their nonlinguistic knowledge as well". They should also know that not every clue is equally important to the message. Therefore, even when they miss a piece of language, they need not worrythere is a good chance that other clues will make them understand the message, or at least, enough of the message for their own aim. Listening comprehension is regarded theoretically as an active process in which individuals concentrate on selected aspects of aural input, form meaning from passages, and associate what they hear with existing knowledge.

From the definition above, it can be concluded that listening comprehension is the ability to understand what the speakers are saying. It is the active process to get the implicit and explicit meaning both linguistic and non linguistic knowledge.

How to Teach Listening

In teaching listening, the teachers need some principles in order to make the teaching and learning process successful. Brown (2004) suggests some principles for teaching listening. They are as follows:

1) In an interactive, four-skill curriculum, make sure that the teachers do not overlook the important of techniques that specifically develop listening comprehension competence;
2) Use techniques that make the students intrinsically motivating;
3) Utilize authentic language and context;
4) Be careful to consider the form of listeners responses;
5) Encourage the development of listening strategies.
6) Use both bottoms-up and top-down listening techniques.

Successful listening can also be looked at in terms of the strategies the listener uses when listening. Rost (2002: 155) identifies strategies that are used by successful listeners. They are predicting, inferring, monitoring, clarifying, responding, and evaluating. First, predicting is about what listeners think about what they will hear. This fits into the ideas about pre-listening mentioned earlier. The second is inferring. It is useful for learners to listen between the lines. Next is monitoring. Good listeners notice what they do and do not understand. Next, it is clarifying. The efficient learners will ask questions and give feedback to the speaker. In the responding, the listeners will react to what they hear. The last is evaluating. In evaluating, the listeners will check on how well they have understood. Strategies can be thought as the ways in which a learner approaches and manages a task, and listeners can be taught effective ways of approaching and managing their listening. These activities involve the listeners actively in the process of listening. Besides, it is also required the appropriate listening sequences in order to make the successful listening. Wilson (2008: 160) mentions three listening sequences. They are pre-listening, while-listening, and post listening. They will be explained in details as follows:

1)Pre-Listening

The first stage involves active schemata to help students to predict the content. The pre-listening stage should prepare students by helping them activate their

background knowledge and clarify their expectations and assumptions about the text. An ideal pre-listening task is one in which the teacher, through carefully constructed questions, helps the students to activate the background information and language components including the vocabularies used. A successful listening activity will depend on what students do during pre-listening.

2)While-Listening

In the while-listening, the students hear the input once, for listening gist. Then, they listen a second time, either in order to check or answer more details Questions. There are some important points in doing while-listening. They are:

a)Allow students to listen to the text two or three times as a whole;
b)Encourage student to focus on global meaning first and do not ask the students for details after the first listen;
c)Encourage students to make assumptions after the first listen and verify them after the second listen;
d)Focus the questions and attention at this stage on the segments of the texts that are accessible to the students in terms of vocabulary and structures. The students don't need to get everything in the text.

3)Post-Listening

There is an emphasis on helping the students with difficulties and reflecting on performance. A post-listening activity represents a follow up to the listening activity and aims to utilize the knowledge gained from listening for the development of other skills such as speaking or writing. The appropriate listening activities in every stage are also required to make the listening successful.

How to assemble students' Listening Comprehension through ESL Podcasting

1. Introduce to the students "What is Podcasting"

To essemble students' listening comprehension, the teacher should introduce "what is Podcasting to the student. Podcasting is a term inspirited by the apple Computer Corporation's iPod, a portable digital audio player that allows users to download music from their computer directly to the device for later listening. The term refers to any software and hardware combination thematic downloading of audio files (most commonly in MP3 format) for listening.

Harmer (2007) defines podcast as downloadable files which the user can load on to their own personal MP3 players, such as iPods.

Borja (2005), Man (2006) explain Podcast as audio (sometime vidio) program on the Web which are usually updated at regular intervals by some users of net or the owner of those program. New episode of those programs can be be listened to on the computer, or downloaded to an MP3 player or iPod or such digital mobiles for later listening. Besides the term podcast from two technologies used in media player, *iPod, and 'Broadcast"*. Podcast is also the method of distributing multimedia files such as audio programs or music video over the internet for play back on mobiles devices and personal computers (wikpedia,2012).

According to Stanley (2006) although audio programs have existed on the Web for a few years already, podcasting is unique because its capacity for subscription

through an RSS (Really Simple Syndication) feed, listener can subscribe their favorite Podcast. Their computer will then receive alert when new episodes have been posted. Podcaster software programs, such as iTunes, will even download, instead of having to visit Websites regularly for updates episodes, listener can have the latest episodes of their favorite programs deliver to their computer. Listener do not need to visit every website frequently for new podcast episode; they can now find a huge collection of podcast on iTunes store.

Files –podcast creator – internet – computer – play there (eg.MP3)

Podcast are shows, similar to radio or TV shows that are produced by professionals or amateurs and posted to the internet for download and listening or viewing. Many podcast are made available for free, though some must be purchased.

2. *Explain to the students Type of Podcasting*

To make the students interest with podcast, the steacher should explaine type of podcast. Lee (2007) explains that Podcast available on the Web fall broadly into types:"radio Podcast" and independent Podcast". Radio podcast are existing radio programs turned into Podcast, such as those produced by BBC (British Broadcasting Corporation). Independent podcast are Web based podcast produced by individual and organization.

Many types of podcasts are found on the internet such television podcast, radio podcast and classroom podcast are existing programs and lectures turned into podcast such as those created by VOA (Voice of America). Individual or group podcast are real podcast designed for multiple purposes such as those created by the website *http://grammar.quckandirtytips.com/*.

According to Stanley (2005) there are three types of podcast. The first type is authentic podcasts. It is suitable for higher level students. The second type is teacher podcast. It produced by teachers for their own classes. It aimed to help students learn by producing listening content that is not available elsewhere, or that gives a local flavor. The last type is students' podcasts. It produce by students. The students listen to the experience, the culture, and listen the lives and interest of other students around the world.

3. *Explain to the students "What is ELT Podcasting"*

ELT podcast cover a wide range of subject matter. According to Man (2006), there are nine content types of podcast, as follows:
   a) Comprehensive (e.g., http://www.englishteacherjohn.com/podcast/)
   b) Podcasts that cover a wide range of content types, such as traditional listening comprehension activities, interview and vocabularies.
   c) Whole lesson (e.g., http://www.breakingnewsenglish.com/)
   d) There are whole lesson based on a podcast. The teacher can use it in the classroom directly. For example, makes use of a new story in each episode. The text of the news story is provided, and is accompanied by the audio file. There is then a lesson plan with accompanying worksheet materials.
   e) Vocabulary and idiom (eg., http://englishteacherjhon.com)

f) This is a popular type of podcast because it is easy procedure. The host chooses some vocabulary items and explain their usage such as presents a few idiom in each episode.

g) Conversation with script (e.g., http://www.e-poche.net/conversations)

h) These podcasts contain conversation between native speakers to help less proficient students, each episode is accompanied by the script, for the students to refer to while listening to the conversation.

i) Jokes (e.g., http;//www.manythings.org/jokes)

j) Podcasts that contain of jokes because they usually play on language, they encourage careful listening by the students.

k) Phonetics, pronunciation (e.g., http;//phoneticpodcast.com)

l) Podcasts are obviously highly suited for teaching phonetic and pronunciation. These podcasts are lessons which focus on specific phonemes and pronunciation problems in English.

m) Stories (e.g., http://www.englishthroughstories.com)

n) These are usually reading aloud story. They may or may not be followed by listening comprehension questions.

o) Listening comprehension (e.g., http://mylcpodcasts.blogspot.com)

p) Podcasts that provide conventional listening comprehension practice.

Based on the theories above, it can inferred that podcasts offer interesting topic based on the teacher and the students need. Each of them have different target. The teachers and students can choose the interesting topic that be utilized in listening activities. The teacher can design their own level material using podcast.

4. Tell to the students the Benefit of podcast

Podcast is an importance and significant source which can use to teach listening. It can be used to increase students listening comprehension. Most of producers of podcast are educators and intellectuals who use this technology to communicate with their students. It is a tool that allows teachers to share their idea and suggestions in order to improve their method of teaching.

The podcast online provide a wealth of material for teaching listening. According to Constantine (2007), podcast can be classified in to several levels and deals with the questions of the advantages of podcasts, selection of the most benefit ones, and discusses how to maximize learning from them. Furthermore, Constantine (2007) explains three advantages of podcasts for students, they are: (1) it benefit for students for global listening, (2) students will be expose to the new language, and (3) intermediate students has a need for authentic text and to be exposed to a variety of voice.

It is clear that the benefit of using podcasts for the students comprehending the oral text. They can listen to the native speakers of English that can be played everywhere and anytime. They will get many free resource of podcast easily.

1. Ask the students to download ESL Podcast program and do listening practice

The teacher can ask the students to use computer, tablet or hand phone that is connected with internet then do the steps below:
- ✓ Choose play Store
- ✓ Find ESL Podcast
- ✓ Download the program
- ✓ Choose the topic
- ✓ Download audio and vidio recording
- ✓ Do listening practice

Conclusion

Assembling students' listening comprehension through podcast allows students to be active listener. They can use ESL Podcast to practice their listening skill every where and every time. This paper encourage English Language Teachers and students to use podcasts in the classroom since ESL Podcast as an interesting activity in which students can enhence their listening comprehension. The teacher can teach English in a simple and easy way. By using ESL Podcasting the teacher teach students how to be an effective listeners as well as good speakers since most of the topics in podcast can be choosed based on the syllabus. Biside teaching language with the help of diverse activities based on podcasts the teacher can enhance competence in the use of technology that can be used as a motivational technique to keep students on task.

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