English Learning Strategies:

How to Improve Your Listening

For English learners who are studying English in a country where English is not widely spoken, listening is often one of the most difficult skills to develop. You may be able to read and understand English fairly well, but have difficulty understanding it when someone speaks to you. If you are one of these learners, you need to spend more time developing your listening skills.

Your Listening Ability: English vs. Native Language

Compare your ability to listen to English with your ability to listen to your native language. Can you see the difference? You can probably listen to and understand your native language effortlessly. But when you listen to English, you may not understand it easily. You may need to listen to the same sentence again and again and pay close attention. Sometimes, you may even feel that English is spoken too fast.

Why does this happen? This happens because English hasn't yet become an automatic "language signal" in your brain. Simply put, you haven't accumulated enough total hours of exposure yet.

How to Improve Your Listening

To improve your listening skills, you need to listen to English a lot. With enough practice, English words and phrases will gradually become familiar language signals in your brain.

Here are three things you can do:

1. **Listen repeatedly.** All the conversations and reading passages at **eslfast.com** and **rong-chang.com** have audio players with a repeat button. Close your eyes and listen to a passage. If you get stuck, open your eyes to check for new vocabulary. Learn the word, close your eyes, and listen again until the English sounds as natural as your native language.
2. **Listen attentively.** When you listen, focus on what you are hearing. It is a waste of time to listen to English while daydreaming. Try to understand the meaning of a whole sentence rather than focusing on individual words. Use the backward and forward buttons on the audio player to go back to difficult parts and listen to them several times.
3. **Listen for enjoyment.** Choose content that genuinely interests you, whether that's news, podcasts, movies, or TV shows. Integrate English into your daily life: attend English-speaking gatherings, watch foreign films. When you do push-ups, count in English instead of your native language.

Be Patient With Your Progress

It is normal to feel frustrated when progress seems slow. Consider how many thousands of hours you have spent immersed in your native language. You have used your native language daily since birth to think, speak, and even dream.

Difficulty with listening isn't a lack of ability; it is simply a need for more time and practice. If you can master your native language, you can master English too. Keep listening!

Warm regards,

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