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IMPROVING SPELLING SKILLS FOR IELTS LISTENING: STRATEGIES FOR STUDENTS

Annotation: This study explores common spelling mistakes in the IELTS listening test and provides with useful tips and strategies. It identifies key strategies such as pronunciation drills, dictation practice and letter by letter reading to improve listening accuracy. This study provides valuable insights for educators and learners aiming to improve spelling accuracy and listening proficiency high-stakes language assessments.

Annotatsiya: Ushbu tadqiqot IELTS tinglab tushunish testi bo'yicha keng tarqalgan imlo xatolarini o'rganib chiqadi va ularni bajarishda samaradorlikka erishish uchun foydali maslahatlar va strategiyalarni taklif qiladi. Tadqiqotda talaffuz mashqlari, diktant mashqlari va so'zlarni harfma-harf o'qish kabi asosiy strategiyalar yechim sifatida taklif qilinadi. Ushbu strategiyalar tinglash aniqligini oshirish va imlo xatolarini kamaytirishga qaratilgan. Tadqiqot IELTS Listening vazifalariga tayyorgarlik ko'rayotgan o'qituvchilar va o'quvchilar uchun qimmatli ma'lumotlarni taqdim etadi.

Аннотация: Данное исследование изучает распространенные ошибки в написании слов в тесте IELTS Listening и предлагает полезные советы и стратегии их устранения. Были выделены ключевые стратегии, такие как упражнения по произношению, диктанты и чтение текста по буквам, направленные на улучшение восприятия на слух и точности правописания. Это исследование предоставляет ценные рекомендации преподавателям и учащимся, стремящимся улучшить навыки правописания и понимания на слух в условиях высоких требований языковых экзаменов.

Key words: ELTS Listening, Spelling accuracy, Pronunciation drills, Dictation exercises, Phonetic errors, Language learning strategies, Listening test preparation, Letter-by-letter reading, Spelling improvement, Confidence building.

Introduction

As it is obvious that nowadays, many people are taking IELTS test for different purposes such as study, work, travel or business. To successfully pass the exams, learners must know the language well and be familiar with the test structure. As it is not an easy process, many learners face with various challenges. One of them that occurs most is spelling mistakes. It is quite important to tackle this problem, since Spelling errors can significantly lower a candidate's score in the Listening test, particularly in tasks involving orally spelled words such as names, addresses, and technical terms. Despite many sources available on the internet, students still find difficulty in spelling and can't stop making similar errors. Being unable to differentiate which letter is pronounced or missing some numbers during listening is one of those problems that students are facing over and over again. In another words, targeted strategies for spelling improvement remain underexplored and students need more practical tips. This document intends to offer effective methods for assisting students in improving their spelling abilities for the IELTS Listening examination.

Methods

The data used in this research were collected from the answers of 5 participants who are preparing for IELTS exam for study purposes. Participants are those who are between 20 to 25 age range, three female and two male in terms of gender. They have been learning the language for more than 4 years and still not achieving their targeted results. The level of their proficiency is upper-intermediate with good general knowledge. Yet, what they lack is listening test strategies and a little bit practice. A standardized IELTS Listening practice test was administered to all participants under conditions replicating a real exam setting. The test included sections that required spelling accuracy, such as completing forms, spelling names, and filling in blanks with technical terms or numbers. After the test, the works of participants were checked and certain errors were found. Those errors might be classified as following: Phonetic errors (misinterpreting sounds), Letter omission or addition, Confusion between similar-sounding letters (e.g., “b” vs. “d”). Having the analysis of errors, certain strategies were applied for improvement. As the first strategy, Pronunciation drills were applied, in which students are required to focus on the Alphabet practicing each letter in order to recognize misinterpreting sounds such as /e/ /i/ /a/. Students became familiar with the correct pronunciation of each letter in English, especially:

Vowels: A, E, I, O, U

Similar sounds: B/P, C/S, D/T, M/N, F/V

Tricky letters with variations: Z (zee vs. zed), H (pronounced "aitch")

These letters sound similar to each other and if they are misheard, the answer for the test will be counted as incorrect. What the students did next was making the list of those resembling letters and emphasizing their practice. As the second strategy, dictating names and addresses as they often appear in the IELTS Listening test were applied. For example, Common names: Sarah, Michael, David, etc. Foreign names: Mohammed, Zhang, Dmitri (to simulate real test challenges). As the third strategy, reading a small text letter by letter instead of word for word were chosen as a practice. For example, 'The dog barked loudly.' T-H-E D-O-G B-A-R-K-E-D L-O-U-D-L-Y. This method is a really good way to get better at spelling, listening, and language in general. Its capacity to improve accuracy, sharpen focus, and strengthen the link between written language and sounds are its main advantages. Besides, it requires learners to focus carefully on every sound and its corresponding written form. This attention to detail reduces common errors like mishearing letters or omitting parts of words. Furthermore, Repeated practice helps learners feel more confident in their ability to spell correctly and recognize patterns in language. This confidence translates to better performance in listening tests and real-world communication.

Results and Discussion

The participants' spelling accuracy significantly improved once the suggested solutions were put into practice. Following the practice sessions, the following modifications were shown by the participants: Decrease in Spelling Mistakes: As students learned how to pronounce specific letters and sounds correctly, the number of phonetic errors dropped by 35%. Also, Students' attention to detail improved as they wrote and listened, as evidenced by a 40% decrease in errors involving letter addition or omission. Moreover, with a 30% mistake reduction, confusion between similar-sounding letters (such as "b" and "d") declined dramatically. When it came to managing listening tasks that required spelling, participants said they felt more secure. They said that they were able to predict and identify possible trouble spots throughout the test by practicing with similar-sounding letters and words on a regular basis. Students who read letters one at a

time formed the habit of carefully digesting information, which led to fewer hasty or thoughtless errors.

The results are consistent with previous studies on how spelling drills and phonological awareness enhance language proficiency. For example, according to Richards (2008) "Listening is a critical element in the language acquisition process, and developing effective listening skills requires a combination of focused attention, active engagement, and regular practice. Dictation exercises and other listening-based tasks encourage learners to process spoken language accurately while reinforcing their ability to associate sounds with their written representations". He highlights the value of active-engagement listening tasks, like dictation, to improve students' auditory discrimination and accuracy. Likewise, Rello et al. (2015) emphasize how focused spelling drills can lower mistakes and increase self-assurance.

The study's findings highlight the importance of using useful techniques in IELTS preparation, such as letter-by-letter reading and pronunciation drills. These techniques not only help students with particular difficulties, but they also promote long-term growth in spelling and listening comprehension. Nevertheless, more studies with bigger sample sizes and a wider range of participant backgrounds might offer more thorough understandings of the efficacy of these strategies.

Conclusion

This study highlights spelling difficulties students are facing with and effective strategies for improvement. Findings show that most of the students who are preparing for IELTS exams tend to make spelling errors particularly in note completion task types. Considering these problems, this study suggested certain tips to successfully accomplish listening tasks. Exercises such as pronunciation drills and dictation offered in this study as key strategy has shown its effectiveness. Especially letter-by-letter reading strategy significantly improved students' self-confidence and overall performance in listening tasks. To improve spelling practice even more, future studies should examine the incorporation of advanced vocabulary, varied accents, and technologically aided resources. Both teachers and students are urged to use these techniques in order to improve their performance on the IELTS listening test and in real-world communication situations.

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