

THE ROLE OF LISTENING IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING METHODOLOGY

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Annotation. *Every aspect of the language requires thorough investigation and research as it has own peculiar features which demand to be taken into consideration. We know that language came into life as a means of communication. It exists and is alive only through speech. When we speak about teaching a foreign language, we first of all have in mind teaching it as a means of communication. One of the ways to do so is teaching listening comprehension. This aspect is not very thoroughly studied and is still in the focus of many methodologists' attention.*

The article considers problems and difficulties of listening comprehension. The aim of the article is to find out what is listening comprehension is, its peculiarities; the most appropriate ways and methods of teaching in order to make a successful learning. If we give the definition to the word "listening" - listening is the ability to identify and understand what others are saying. This involves understanding a speaker's accent or pronunciation, his grammar and his vocabulary, and grasping his meaning. An able listener is capable of doing these four things simultaneously.

When listening a foreign language students should be very attentive and think hard. They should strain their memory and will power to keep the sequence of sounds they hear and decode it. There are three kinds of difficulties that students should overcome when listening a foreign language. They are: phonetic, lexical and grammatical.

Successful learning is in the hands of the successful teaching and every teacher should know what to teach and how to teach. We should conduct the lessons in English to be a native speaker for our students in order they could receive a brilliant ability in listening comprehension. Listening makes a great contribution to increase the inner motivation for studying a foreign language. When a person understands what he hears he is eager to speak and communicate.

Keywords: listening comprehension, grasp, utterance, retain, anticipation, perception, spoken discourse, efficient listener.

Аннотация. Каждый аспект языка требует тщательного расследования и исследования, поскольку оно имеет только свойственные специфические особенности, которые требуют быть принятым во внимание. Мы знаем, что язык вошел в жизнь как в средство общения. Оно существует через речь. Когда мы говорим об обучении иностранного языка, мы, в первую очередь,

имеем в виду обучение его как средство общения. Один из способов является аудирование. Этот аспект не очень полностью изучен и находится все еще в центре внимания многих методистов.

Статья рассматривает проблемы и трудности понимания слушания. Цель статьи состоит в том, чтобы определить, что такое аудирование, его особенности и самые соответствующие пути и методы обучения, чтобы сделать успешное изучение. Если мы даем определение слову “слушание” - способность определить и понять то, что говорят другие. Это включает понимание акцента или произношения говорящего, его грамматики и его словаря и схватывания его значения. Способный слушатель способен к выполнению этих четырех вещей одновременно.

Слушая иностранный язык студенты должны быть очень внимательными. Они должны напрягать свою память и силу, чтобы сохранять последовательность звуков, которые они слышат, и расшифровать его. Есть три вида трудностей, которые студенты должны преодолеть при прослушивании иностранного языка. Они: фонетический, лексический и грамматический.

Успешное обучение в руках успешного преподавания и каждый учитель должен знать, чему учить и как учить. Мы должны провести уроки на английском языке, чтобы быть носителем языка для наших студентов, чтобы они могли получить блестящую способность в понимании аудирования. Прослушивание делает большой вклад в повышение внутренней мотивации для изучения иностранного языка. Когда человек понимает, что он слышит, он готов говорить и общаться.

Ключевые слова: аудирование, схватывание, высказывание, удерживать, предвкушение, восприятие, разговорная беседа, эффективный слушатель.

When we say a person knows the language we first of all mean he understands the language spoken and can speak it himself. Language came into life as a means of communication. It exists and is alive only through speech. When we speak about teaching a foreign language, we first of all have in mind teaching it as a means of communication. Speech is a bilateral process. It includes hearing, on the one hand, and speaking on the other. When we say “hearing” we mean listening or listening comprehension.

What is listening? Listening is the ability to identify and understand what others are saying. This involves understanding a speaker’s accent or pronunciation, his grammar and his vocabulary, and grasping his meaning. An able listener is capable of doing these four things simultaneously.

Every teacher should remember that listening comprehension is a complex psycho-physiological process which implies the work of psychological mechanisms – mechanisms of memory, of thinking, of anticipation, of oral perception etc. The sense of apprehension of speech is “мыслительно-мнемическая” activity which is realized through the complex logical operations such as analysis, synthesis, deduction, induction, comparison, abstraction and so on. Listening comprehension leans on hearing sensations. Our organs of hearing are under the influence of the colloquial speech. When we listen somebody’s speech we reproduce it simultaneously in the form of inner speech. The speed of utterance shouldn’t fall behind the hearing sensations and important role is also given to distinct articulatory habits which are the condition of clearness and quickness of understanding [1,87].

Listening is difficult for learners because they should discriminate speech sounds quickly, retain them while hearing a word, a phrase, or a sentence and recognize these as a sense unit. Students can easily and naturally do this in their native language and they cannot this in a foreign language when they start learning the language. Students are very slow in grasping what they hear because they are conscious of linguistic forms they perceive by the ears. This results in misunderstanding or a complete failure of understanding. While listening a foreign language students should be very attentive and think hard. They should strain their memory and will power to keep the sequence of sounds they hear and to decode it. Not all the students can cope with the difficulties and entailed. The teacher should help them by making this work easier and more interesting. This is possible on condition that he will take into consideration the following three main factors which can ensure success in developing students’ skills in listening:

- 1) linguistic material for listening;
- 2) the content of the material suggested for listening comprehension;
- 3) condition in which the material is presented [2,21].

1)Comprehension of the text can be ensured when the teacher uses the material which has already been assimilated by students. However, this does not completely eliminate the difficulties in listening. Students need practice in listening comprehension in the target language to be able to overcome **three kinds of difficulties**: phonetic, lexical and grammatical.

Phonetic difficulties appear because the phonic system of English is different. The hearer often interprets the sounds of a foreign language as if they were of his native language which usually results in misunderstanding. The following opposites present much trouble to beginners in learning English:

θ – s	tr – tʃ	ʌ – ɔ	a: – ɔ
θ – f	dr – dʒ	s – z	ɔ: – ə:
w – v		t – tʃ	æe – e

Students also find it difficult to discriminate such opposites as:

ɔ: – ɔ, a – ʌ, i: – i, u: – u

They can hardly differentiate the following words by ear: **worked-walked; first-forced; lion-line; tired-tide; bought-board-boat**. The difference in intonation often prevents students from comprehending a communication. For example, Good morning (When meeting), Good morning (at parting). The teacher, therefore, should develop his students' ear for English sounds and intonation. Lexical difficulties are closely connected with the phonetic ones. Students often misunderstand words because they hear them wrong. For example, the horse is sleeping. The horse is slipping. They worked till night. They walked till night. The opposites are often misunderstood for the learners often take one word for another. For example: east-west, take-put, ask-answer. The most difficult words for listening are the verbs with prepositions, such as put on, put off, put down, take off, see off, go in, go in for, etc.

Grammatical difficulties are mostly connected with the analytic structure of the English language, and with the extensive use of infinitive and participle constructions.

Besides, English is rich in grammatical homonyms; for example: **to work-work;**

To answer-answer;-ed as the suffix of the Past Indefinite and the Past participle. The distinction between the dark and clear/I/ in Russian causes similar problems to the native speaker. Many students find consonant clusters particularly difficult to cope with. They may get the consonants in the wrong order (parts-past: crips-crisp) or hear a vowel that is not in fact pronounced ("little" - little).

The number of **homophones** and **homonyms** in English is small, while the number of words which can be confused or misunderstood by inaccurate perception is relatively large. Even if working out what the right word must be taken only a split second, it still slows down comprehension fractionally – and spoken discourse goes by so fast that the foreign listener simply cannot afford a moment's delay. He may sometimes even understand the word according to what sounds like in spite of the fact that his interpretation does not have the time to stop and work it out. It is therefore essential for the learner to achieve familiarity with the common phonemes of the target language as soon as possible if he is to be an efficient listener [3,94].

2) The content of the material also influences comprehension. The following factors should be taken into consideration when selecting the material for listening:

- The topic of communication: whether it is within the ability of the pupils to understand, and what difficulties students will come across (proper names, geographical names, terminology, etc.)

- The type of communication: whether it is a description or a narration. Description as a type of communication is less emotional and interesting, that is why it is difficult for the teacher to arouse students' interest in listening such a text. Narration is more interesting for listening. Consequently, this type of communication should be used for listening comprehension.

The context and students' readiness (intellectual and situational) to understand it.

- The way the narrative progresses: whether the passage is taken from the beginning of a story, the nucleus of the story, the progress of the action, finally, the end of the story. The title of the story may be helpful in comprehending the main idea of the text. The simpler the narrative progresses, the better it is for developing students' skills in listening.
- The form of communication: whether the text is a dialogue or a monologue. Monologic speech is easier for the learners, therefore, it is preferable for developing students' ability to listening.

3) Conditions of presenting the material are of great importance for teaching listening, namely:

- The speed of the speech the student is listening. The hearer cannot change the speed of the speaker. The temp of the speech consists of two aspects – the number of syllables per minute and the number of speech pauses. It also depends in the importance of given information contained in separate parts of the utterance. The most important information is given slower by means of emphasizing the length of the vowels. Speaking about the character of the message it is noticed that the emotionally colored reading is slower than the sport news. Also we should not ignore the rhythm, stress and especially pauses. Thus the reduction of pauses makes the sense perception worse. Pauses are so necessary for the student to grasp the information of each portion between the pauses.

- The number of times of presenting the material for listening: whether the students should listen to the text once, twice, three times or more, students should be taught to listen to the text once and this must become a habit. However, they sometimes can grasp only 50% of the information and even less, so a second presentation may be helpful. In case, the students cannot grasp most of the information, practice proves that manifold repetitions when hearing do not help much. It is necessary to help students in comprehension by using a “feedback”

established through a dialogue between the teacher and the class which takes as much time as it is required for the repetitive presentation of the material [4,51].

Now I want to say some words about coping with redundancy of noise. When listening to someone speaking we usually have to put up with a certain amount of “noise”. Some words may be drowned by outside interference, others indistinctly pronounced. The foreign language learner, whose grasp of meaning is slower and demands more of an effort finds these gaps far more difficult to take in his stride. In the early stages of foreign language learning when the learner hears usually only single words or short sentences, he has to understand them all. Later, listening comprehension passages get longer, but in most cases they are still graded to suit his level taken slowly and pronounced carefully, and he is still expected to understand everything. A foreign language learner who tries to understand every single word that is said to him will be handicapped both by his failure to do so and also, by his success. On the one hand he is stressed and discouraged by his “defective” comprehension, has the feeling that he has missed vital words, and may tell you “I didn’t understand a thing” when in fact he has, or could have understood quite enough for communicative purposes. Much of what we hear is redundant, and we have to recognize it as such. He is concentrating very hard – too hard – on understanding the words or phrases as they come up and not relaxing enough to gather the main message.

The success of listening depends on the listener’s ability to use the anticipation, to use the habits and skills developed on their native language in studying the foreign one. The important role is also given to the individual characteristics of a person such as quick-wit, his ability to listen and response quickly on different signals of oral communication (pauses, logical stress, etc.) the ability to switch to another thinking operation, to understand the main theme and so on. The successful listening also depends on the level of interest to a certain theme [5,131]. The orderly prepared process of teaching help to create inner motivation. It is difficult to percept by ear and to keep the consequence of the utterance if you have to do operations of differentiating, grouping, picking up simultaneously. There is a factor testifying about the limits of attention, about the complications and sometimes impossibility to keep one’s eye on several objects. We can use a brilliant combinations of individual, class and group work, work in pairs, various and interesting forms of control, comment of marks indicating the improvement in listening.

What can teachers do to help students overcome the difficulties? Teachers should use the target language as a means of communication and as a means of teaching at the lesson. Conducting a lesson in a foreign language gives the teacher an opportunity to develop students’ abilities in hearing; to train them in listening to

him attentively during the lesson; to demonstrate the language as a means of communication. The teacher also can use drill and speech exercises for developing listening comprehension. For example, phonetic exercises help the teacher to develop students' ear for English sounds, lexical exercises help the teacher to develop students' skills in recognizing words, and grammar exercises help the teacher develop students' skills in recognizing grammar forms and structures.

All in all, every teacher of foreign language can cope with the difficulties of listening comprehension using different kinds of methods.

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