

THE IMPORTANCE OF LISTENING IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING

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Abstract

This article examines the importance of using listening in foreign language teaching. Listening is the foundation of communication, and it is the beginning of mastering oral communication. Mastering this type of speech activity, such as listening, allows a person to understand what is being communicated and respond appropriately to what is being said, helping them formulate their responses correctly. When teaching listening, it is necessary to follow a specific sequence of exercises. Before listening to the text, exercises are usually performed that require differentiating new information, identifying the title, and recognizing individual elements.

Keywords: Listening, communication, learning, activity, definition, syntactic feature, comprehension, level, information.

Introduction

Listening is the foundation of communication; it is the beginning of mastering oral communication. Mastering this form of speech activity, such as listening, allows a person to understand what is being communicated and respond appropriately to what is said, helping them formulate their responses correctly. When teaching listening, levels of comprehension and methods for monitoring them play an important role.

The goal of any monitoring is to determine the level of development of speech skills and how accurately and completely students have perceived a particular audio text.

The most well-known typology (as applied to listening) is A.R. Luria's, which identifies four levels of comprehension: the word level, the sentence level, the level of a complex syntactic whole (semantic chunk), and the text level. The main differences between these levels are the depth and accuracy of comprehension, as well as the complexity of the operations performed by the listener.

Word-level comprehension is fragmented and depends on the relationship between the listener's active, passive, and potential vocabularies, as well as their ability to utilize the determinative function of phrases and context. A novice auditory learner often distinguishes individual words and simple phrases by ear, inferring the topic of the message from these.

Understanding sentences depends on their syntactic features. A simple sentence presents no difficulty, as it is a familiar and well-established unit of spoken language. Understanding the logical and grammatical structure of a complex sentence presents particular difficulty. Mental



processes in this case are associated with a special form of synthesis of individual elements and the simultaneous, rather than sequential, visibility of the entire sentence.

Understanding a complex syntactic whole occurs through dissecting the speech message into parts and its semantic grouping, determining the means of connecting the sentences that make up the semantic unit, and determining its theme, the beginning and end of a thought based on key syntactic features (inversion, introductory words, conjunctions at the beginning and end of the semantic unit, etc.).

Perception of the entire text depends on understanding the predicative connections between sentences, as these are the most stable and informative, as well as on the compositional and semantic structure of the text, style, and genre.

This typology of comprehension levels is interesting for developing predictive skills and allows one to trace the complexity of formulating formal and semantic hypotheses, but is of little use for organizing assessment. Using levels of perception developed for reading in listening comprehension also seems inappropriate, as the perception of spoken language has its own specific characteristics. If we are guided by the criteria of completeness and accuracy of comprehension, then we can agree with the gradation proposed for lecture comprehension. The first of the three levels identified is characterized by a general understanding of what the lecturer is saying, the second by an understanding of the subject matter. The third level is an understanding of the main idea. In this case, the listener understands the topic, content of the lecture, and the means by which it is expressed.

Given the data on the gradual nature of comprehension, a slightly different division could be proposed:

1. The level of fragmented (superficial) comprehension.
2. The level of global (general) comprehension.
3. The level of detailed (complete) comprehension.
4. The level of critical comprehension.

Exercises that test the depth and completeness of comprehension should only relate to these three levels; they can also reveal fragmentary comprehension.

The level of detailed comprehension is determined by filling in the blanks in a graphic key, which represents an abbreviated or complete summary of what was heard. Depending on the language proficiency of the listeners and the complexity of the text, the gaps may be larger or smaller (for example, every eleventh word, every seventh, or every third word is omitted).

The level of detailed comprehension is tested through answering questions, retelling in the native and foreign languages, creating a detailed plan, etc.

The level of critical comprehension is associated with evaluating what has been heard, identifying key information, commenting and discussing—that is, with all kinds of creative, problem-solving tasks that require understanding the emotional and evaluative elements of the text and the ability to relate the content to the communicative situation. When teaching listening, it is necessary to follow a specific sequence of exercises. Before listening to the text, students usually complete exercises that require differentiating new information, identifying the title, and recognizing individual elements (numbers, dates, proper names). Exercises that



require personal evaluation of what has been heard follow those that require finding data, evidence, and other elements in the text.

Exercises that teach "subject understanding" are easier than those that teach logical understanding. Therefore, they should be the starting point. The most difficult exercises are those that require students to evaluate what they have read and, to some extent, uncover the subtext. They can only be based on a very precise and sufficiently comprehensive understanding of the factors themselves and the relationships between them. Therefore, such exercises should conclude the entire series. Furthermore, the listening exercises group can include both exercises independent of listening to a specific text and exercises specific to the text. Exercises related to a specific text should be divided into exercise tasks that direct students' attention to perceiving and understanding the listening material, and exercises that accompany the listening of the text.

A very important group in the system of listening exercises are exercises that allow for the simultaneous teaching of both listening comprehension and the ability to express one's thoughts in a foreign language. When conducting final assessments, the following indicators should be used: comprehension of facts, the accuracy and quantity of facts understood, and the depth of comprehension.

References

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