

PRINCIPLES OF FORMATION OF LISTENING SKILLS OF STUDENTS IN HIGHER EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

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Summary

The article views listening comprehension as a type of speech activity and an important aspect of teaching a foreign language, allowing students to communicate with native speakers successfully. The formation of auditory skills makes significant difficulties for students, since complex psychophysiological processes are involved in the process of perceiving speech, and the listening process itself is accompanied by difficulties associated with both the language form of the message and the various characteristics of the message source and the conditions of its presentation. The author of the article analyzes the features of listening comprehension as a type of speech activity and the aspect of studying, considers difficulties of developing the students' auditory competence and suggests the principles of auditory competence formation based on the specifics of the development of language and speech skills in the natural environment: principles of communication, activity, interaction of the main types of speech activity, accessibility, intensity, visibility, systematic and consistent studies, individualization.

Key words: communication, listening, auditory competence, foreign language, auditory skills, interaction.

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1. Introduction

Social, political and economic formations in all spheres of modern society has led to changes in the field of education. From improvement of international relations, knowledge of a foreign language becomes more and more in demand. It has become a basic element of modern educational system and a means of achieving professional fulfillment personality. In this regard, the purpose of teaching a foreign language at university becomes the student's ability to make direct contact with native speaker in various situations of everyday communication. To understand all the peculiarities of the language, it is necessary to be able to listen, as soon as the student begins to understand colloquial speech, it becomes easier for him improve other skills. That is why it is necessary to form basic listening skills, to give students the opportunity to listen to the correct speech, to learn perceive the message in order to be able to respond to it correctly.

Listening plays an important role in the process of communication. Without the formation of auditory competence, it is impossible to successfully master a foreign language and use it in the future. However, in the process of learning a foreign language, listening comprehension causes great difficulties and often becomes a barrier to successful communication in a foreign language.

Therefore, recently there have been many works devoted to this type of speech activity. They describe listening as a type of speech activity, systematize exercises for the formation of the listening comprehension and understand sounding speech, analyze the psychophysiological mechanisms of listening, consider the criteria for selecting educational material, highlights the difficulties of developing a stable listening skill and ways to overcome them.

In this article, we will consider the features of the process of listening comprehension; give the principles of work on the formation of auditory competence in the classroom and the choice of an effective technology for developing listening skills.

2. The meaning of listening comprehension

The term “listening” (from Latin *audire* – listen, hear), was introduced into the methodology of the American psychologist Don Brown in the 20th century. Listening is the meaningful understanding of audible speech. It is a receptive type of speech activity and, first of all, is aimed at identifying, extracting and processing foreign language information.

Listening, being a reactive type of speech activity, provides the opportunity to communicate in a foreign language, as the listener through feedback channels affects the act of communication, expressing the response with facial expressions, gestures, replicas. In addition, auditory perception can be contact, i.e. be part of the oral interactive communication (situational dialogue communication), and distant, mediated, representing an independent, a form of verbal communication with its own characteristics (for example, listening to radio, TV programs) (*Galskova, 2009*).

Most people remember only 30% of what they hear, since their acoustic perception and auditory memory is underdeveloped. When teaching a foreign language in school focuses on the visual analyzer, which does not lead to positive results in the development of listening skills. Visual nerve intercepts the initiative of perception. To direct attention students on the semantic content of the text, you need to give visual support non-linguistic information from the text, for example, proper names, numbers.

It should be noted that the concepts of “audition” and “listening” have different meanings. Through audition one perceives acoustic scale, which means only understanding of words speaker, and when listening, sounding speech is perceived, its comprehension and active processing of the obtained information.

By listening, we mean “a specially organized, complex, multi-level activity of a student, which is based on the psychophysiological processes of perception of a sequence of speech signals, synthesizing them into words, decoding and comprehension of the sounding text, provided by the functioning of speech-auditory analyzers and reflection mechanisms” (*Zimnyaya, 2003:124*).

The difficulty of working on this type of speech activity lies both in the complexity of the psychophysiological mechanisms involved in it, and in the specificity of auditory skills: it takes quite a lot of time to create them and students can lose these skills if they do not work on them. Therefore, teachers of foreign languages face the problem of choosing the effective

technology of working on this type of speech activity, the need to develop and use special methodological techniques and methods for working with audio texts and monitoring their understanding.

3. The process of listening

Auditory skills can be divided into the ability to listen and hear. The ability to listen is based on a developed phonological and intonation hearing, the ability to divide the speech stream into certain units. The ability to hear implies the ability to understand the message heard, to isolate its main semantic milestones, and learn the general and detailed content of the utterance. In addition, speaking of listening as part of communicative activity, methodologists single out “interactional listening” (listening-interaction), which combines understanding of the interlocutor's oral speech and the ability to actively achieve understanding by asking questions, clarifying questions, verbal or non-verbal reactions to failure in perceiving the meaning of the statement interlocutor.

As methodologists and teachers of foreign languages point out, auditory competence, that is, the ability to understand oral speech, develops most successfully and fastest in the process of natural communication with native speakers, which is explained by the following factors.

When in a speech environment, language acquisition, and therefore the development of the ability to hear and understand the speech of native speakers, occurs naturally. Almost all language and speech skills develop simultaneously and are interconnected, and the ability to hear and speak, which is so difficult and long to form when learning a language in a learning environment, develops in the first place, being vital in a new language environment. The basis of assimilation is not individual sounds or words, but speech segments, “communicative fragments” (*Underwood, 1997*). Comprehensive assimilation of skills and abilities contributes to a more complete and lasting mastery of the language.

An important feature of the process of language acquisition in conditions of natural communication is feedback, which consists of the following: repeated repetition of a speech segment by participants in a communicative act; partial translation into the native language using the instant reflection mechanism; the use in repeated speech segments of synonyms of words that caused difficulties in understanding by the interlocutor studying the language; monitoring the reaction of a communication partner in order to control understanding.

The achievement of speech skills is carried out in a natural way, by trial and error, by reproducing what was heard with corrections made by the interlocutor based on the oral text. As a work on the mistakes made, the normative pronunciation of words and segments of speech by a native speaker and their repetition by the trainee is used.

The undoubted advantage of learning a foreign language in the natural environment is close contact both with its native speakers and with various means of information transmission: television, music, various kinds of written and oral announcements.

However, listening to English speech is accompanied by significant difficulties. This is due to several factors. First, students have insufficiently developed phonemic hearing, and the ability to divide the sounding message into separate words and phrases is also limited. Inner speech is sufficiently expanded and slowed down, and therefore does not allow one to perceive the sounding text at a pace characteristic of native speakers. Students often understand the meaning of what they heard only after mental translation into their native language, which naturally slows down the perception of the audio message.

In addition, insufficiently formed lexical and grammatical skills also hinder the successful understanding of English speech. Taking into account these difficulties in the formation of auditory competence contributes to a more effective mastery of such a complex type of speech activity as listening.

Special attention should be paid to the formation of clear pronunciation skills, since they significantly facilitate the process of listening to foreign speech. This is evidenced by the fact that at the initial stage of training, students often try to articulate the teacher's speech in order to understand it better. In addition, an important aspect of auditory skills is the ability to recognize different types of intonation, utterance rhythm, pauses, and catch logical stress. This contributes to the competent semantic articulation of speech, which facilitates the perception of oral statements. Articulatory hearing, along with phonemic hearing, requires special attention of the teacher and students.

4. Principles of auditory skills

1. The principle of communication. The most effective language and speech skills and abilities are formed in conditions as close as possible to real communication. This applies both to the choice of the subject of texts for listening, and their technical characteristics (speed and clarity of speech, the presence of noise, transport sounds, background noise, etc.), as well as the types of tasks used during the lesson.

2. The principle of activity. Despite the fact that listening refers to the receptive types of speech activity, listening comprehension involves various complex psychophysiological mechanisms and requires great attention from the listener. Successful listening will be only if the recipient is actively involved in the process and the intensity of his mental processes. In addition, it is advisable to offer more tasks that model the cognitive process (for comparison, critical assessment of information, expression of one's own point of view, etc.)

3. The principle of interaction of the main types of speech activity. The language is acquired more successfully if the learning of listening, reading, speaking and writing, the development of phonetic, lexical and grammatical skills are interconnected and simultaneous.

Listening and speaking are closely related, since they are "multidirectional actualization of a single verbal and communicative function of a person" (*Tarnapolskij, 2006:115*). In the process of both listening and reading as receptive activities, similar mechanisms of information perception and decoding are involved. Listening comprehension can become the basis of writing; especially in educational activities (lecture notes, etc.).

4. The principle of accessibility. The selection of materials for listening and types of tasks should be guided by the ability of students to learn the proposed audio material, taking into account their actual level of language skills. There are certain requirements for listening texts at different stages of language learning. For example, at the initial stage, the speed of presenting audio material should not exceed 150 words per minute, and the amount of unfamiliar vocabulary should be no more than 2%.

5. The principle of intensity. Listening skills are difficult to form and quickly lost, therefore, from the beginning of language learning, at least 40% of the study time should be devoted to them.

6. The principle of visibility. It should be noted that in itself the perception of speech by ear is a method of auditory visualization in teaching a foreign language. In addition, in the formation of auditory skills and abilities, the use of written support, illustrations, and paralinguistic elements of speech contribute to optimizing the perception of information

by ear, the stage of probabilistic forecasting, and, ultimately, a better understanding of the material.

7. The principle of systematic and consistency. Only through regular and consistent work on listening skills will a student be able to perceive English speech successfully.

8. The principle of individualization. The formation of auditory skills is more effective when taking into account both the level of students' knowledge of the English language, and their age and personality characteristics, professional and personal interests, the goals of language learning and motivation.

5. Conclusions

Thus, the effective formation of listening skills is possible only in the case of systematic, purposeful work on them, taking into account the psychophysiological mechanisms of listening to foreign speech, taking into account the activity of students, their general level of language proficiency, needs and interests, within the framework of a communicative approach to teaching a language and along with simultaneous development of all language and speech skills and abilities.

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