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DEVELOPING STUDENTS' LISTENING SKILLS WITH THE USE OF AUTHENTIC MATERIALS

This article under review focuses on the importance of authentic materials in developing students' listening skills in the language classroom. Listening in fact is one of the most important keys to language learning. It is also one of the purposes of learning English. Listening skills are very important in building a student's cognitive, behavioral and affective aspects. It is important to know that listening skills develop this ability to interact and communicate with the world efficiently. There are many advantages when students in the language classroom correctly use these skills. Students also commonly learn through listening and paying attention to what they see and hear around them. Authentic materials help them to gain more knowledge and experience in listening, and they develop their own ideas, interests and preferences. After gaining such experiences, students filter important facts and opinions through different listening activities. Understanding such things helps them to guide and discover their individual possibilities. This article also explains a pivotal role of authenticity in teaching listening skills, and the correct usage of authentic materials and graded texts which are suitable to help our students improve their listening and increase their motivation in a bit more detail.

Key words: listening skills, an authentic listening material, an authentic approach, graded texts, comprehension, motivation, specific information.

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Тұпнұсқалық материалдарды пайдалана отырып, студенттердің тыңдап түсіну іскерліктерін дамыту

Бұл макалада студенттерге шетел тілін үйретуде тұпнұсқалық материалдарды дұрыс пайдалана отырып, олардың тыңдап түсіну іскерліктерін дамыту жолдары қарастырылады. Тыңдап түсіну – сөз әрекетінің бір түрі бола отырып, шетел тілін оқытуда және оны менгеруде маңызды орын алады. Тыңдап түсіну әрекетін дұрыс менгеру – шетел тіліне оқытудың басты мақсаттарының бірі болып табылады. Сөз әрекетінің бұл түрін менгеруде тұпнұсқалық материалдарды дұрыс қолдана білу де маңызды. Тыңдап түсіну іскерліктерін дамыту когнитивті және аффективті аспектілерді қалыптастыру үшін де маңызды. Тыңдап түсіну іскерліктерін дұрыс қалыптасуы студенттердің сыртқы ортамен тиімді қарым-қатынас жасауына септігін тигізеді. Шетел тілін үйреніп жатқан студенттер осы іскерліктер мен дағдыларды дұрыс пайдалану арқылы көп нәрсе үйренеді. Тұпнұсқалық материалдар және мәтіндер студенттердің тыңдап түсіну іскерліктерін жоғары деңгейде қалыптастыруға, білім мен тәжірибе жинауға көмегін тигізеді. Студенттер тыңдап түсіну жаттығуларын жасауда тұпнұсқалық материалдардан керекті ақпараттарды немесе негізгі ойды нақты анықтай алатын болады. Сонымен қатар, бұл макалада тұпнұсқалық материалдардың және мәтіндердің дұрыс таңдалып алынып, қолданылуы, олардың студенттердің тыңдап түсіну іскерліктерін дамытуда және шетел тілін менгеруге деген қызығушылықтарын арттыруда алатын негізгі ролі де қарастырылады.

Түйін сөздер: тыңдап түсіну іскерлігі, тыңдап түсіну әрекетін дамытуға арналған тұпнұсқалық материалдар, тұпнұсқалық амал-тәсілдер, жеке топтарға бөлінген мәтіндер, түсіну, мотивация, арнайы ақпарат.

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**Развитие навыков аудирования студентов,
используя аутентичные материалы**

В данной статье рассматривается актуальность аутентичных материалов для аудирования в обучении иностранному языку. Аудирование – это основная часть и вид речевой деятельности. Так же аудирование – основная цель в обучении английскому языку. Навыки аудирования очень важны для построения когнитивных, поведенческих и аффективных аспектов. Важно знать, что навыки аудирования развивают эту способность эффективно взаимодействовать и общаться с миром. Есть много преимуществ, когда студенты в языковом классе правильно используют эти навыки. Студенты также обычно учатся, слушая и обращая внимание на то, что они видят и слышат вокруг них. Аутентичные материалы помогают студентам получить больше знаний и опыта при аудировании, и они разрабатывают свои собственные идеи, интересы и предпочтения. Получив такой опыт, студенты фильтруют важные факты и мнения с помощью различных аутентичных материалов для аудирования. Эта статья также объясняет основную роль аутентичности в обучении навыков аудирования и правильного использования аутентичных материалов и классифицированных текстов, которые подходят и помогают нашим студентам улучшить свои навыки и увеличить их мотивацию.

Ключевые слова: навыки аудирования, аутентичные материалы для аудирования, аутентичный подход, классифицированные тексты, понимание, мотивация, специальная информация.

Introduction

Language learning process is very essential in foreign language teaching. In order to know the language, students should gain all the important speech activities of the foreign language. Listening is one of the important speech activities. Listening skills are so important for learning since they enable language learners to acquire insight of the language and the information, and to aspire and achieve success in communicating with other people. In general, listening implies the minimum of two people talking to each other. It is a process of matching of the mental faculties of the sender of the information and the receiver.

Listening is the communication method that requires the listener to understand, interpret, and assess what they hear. The ability to listen actively can improve personal interaction through reducing problems, increasing cooperation, and fostering understanding.

When communicating with other people, students often are not listening carefully. Sometimes they may be unfocused, thinking about other interesting things, or thinking about what they are going to say next. Listening is a planned way of listening and responding to others, focusing attention on the speaker. There are three basic elements that comprise listening: comprehending, retaining, and responding.

In order to develop students' listening skills, teachers mostly focus on the process of listening

rather than its product: they develop students' awareness of the listening process and listening strategies by asking students to think and talk about how they listen in their native language; they allow students to practice listening strategies by using authentic listening materials and tasks; teachers behave as authentic listeners by responding to student communication as a listener rather than as a teacher; they show students the strategies that will work best for the listening purpose and the type of an authentic text. [1, 4]

There are two main areas of improving students' listening skills: 1) The type of listening activities we choose for them; 2) the way we prepare our students before listening. We would like to challenge some accepted beliefs about the way we prepare our students to listen to the given material and the types of tasks and materials we give them in an effort to encourage teachers to adopt an approach to dealing with listening texts that approximates to an authentic experience.

The most common type of tasks for listening our students are given in language learning classroom is comprehension questions. We may look at almost any language course book listening activity and we will find these. Sometimes listening tasks in the textbook will be True/ False statements, sometimes multiple-choice questions and open *wh*-question. In many ways there is nothing wrong with this, but how often do we really do these types of tasks and activities in our everyday lives? Do you sit down to watch TV or listen to the radio with a set of

questions in front of you? We very much doubt it. As such kinds of tasks, activities and exercises are not developing our students' abilities to understand and process what they have heard in any meaningful kind of way.

Over many years of teaching foreign language (English Language), we have taught lessons that so thoroughly prepared students to listen for the sole purpose of getting the correct answers to a set of prescribed questions that they could hardly fail to get a question wrong. We prepared the students by thoroughly pre-teaching all possible unknown words, word-combinations, phrases and idioms, checked that the language learners understood the context of the listening, and then made sure that they had predicted the possible answers to all the questions. Results were generally good, so what's wrong with this?

Well the problems begin the moment the language learners go out the classroom into the real world. They are surrounded by a vast range of unpredictable, unknown, and even spontaneous language. They have no control over the range of vocabulary they may encounter or the kind of things they will hear or need to respond to. This is why many times; even students who have higher language level do very well in the classroom find it so difficult to cope when faced with a «real» situation. It means, we simply have not taught them in a way that will help students cope with this [2, 1].

Experiment

Before writing this article, firstly, we selected tasks and activities that are «authentic», by which we mean real tasks those real native speakers would do if they were listening to a similar text. In the course of our daily life we never listen to anything for the main purpose of answering true/false questions or multiple-choice questions or any other kinds of questions. These are all sound means of testing ability, but we do not improve our students' ability and skills by testing it, we only ascertain their level of development in listening. As we said «authentic» tasks and activities should be ones that resemble as much as possible the original purpose for which the text was intended. For example, if we listen to a train announcement we do so in order to make sure we know the time of the train we want to catch; if we listen to someone giving directions we do so in order to be able to find a destination. As teachers, selectors and designers of teaching material for listening, we should try to bear this in mind when we set tasks for our students. The key purpose of the authentic

text should define the task we assign our students and in so doing we develop our students' abilities to understand and process what they hear rather than just achieving a score.

After all, using authentic material in the language classroom is the purpose of learning English: to use it in situations outside the classroom environment. What is authentic material? Is it any text produced by native speakers? The definition of authentic texts comes closer to considering any text produced for use outside the classroom, either from native or non-native speakers. The use of graded texts would help more language learners develop their listening skills and work as a motivational factor. Some teachers would say grade the task or activity, not the text. How successful would listening be if you fell don't understand a word? We think a combination of authentic and graded texts would be more suitable to help our students develop their listening skills and increase their motivation to learn the language [3, 2].

Results of the experiment and discussion

We asked our students who were in the language classroom to listen to a recording without any visual clues, let alone any clues that a normal «listener» would have because they were involved in the context by interacting, with the speaker. But most real life listening is done with the speaker in front of us so surely video would a more appropriate medium for delivering listening to students. Also sometimes we used songs as an authentic material, and they were very effective in developing listening skills in the language classroom. It is very essential to teachersto make students get to like English music and it really helps out a lot. English texts are important too, but we definitely believe that listening alongside with speaking are vital to success in this language learning.

For example, in our practice teaching English in the classroom, sometimes we use authentic songs. One day we had a topic «Music» with Intermediate level students. We prepared John Lennon's song «Imagine» for the students. When the song was played, it got immediate appraisal in the class, and all of the studentswere able to understand and got interested. According to the topics which we have in the main textbook (New English File Intermediate), we found simple songs in which singer's language clearly attracts our students and they are getting interested in English songs. In a community where people do not imagine listening to English songs,our students started listening to it, and we have also

found that it is improving their listening skills too. We also used English dialogues and role-plays as practice in our lessons. In this way the lesson can go without hassle and over-burden over students.

Language is a constantly developing form and when we listen in our native language we still hear words that are new to us or that we may not fully understand. This doesn't however lead us to check lists of unknown words in dictionaries or learn word list before we listen. We have evolved a process of deducing the meaning of new words. This is a process we also need to develop in our students. By constantly pre-teaching and preparing students we are undermining the development of this process. Students need to be challenged and to struggle to find meaning for themselves, with our guidance and support, in order to develop this ability. [4, 6]

To make this happen we need to do less pre-teaching and more developmental and post-listening work so that students' first listening to a text is as close as possible to an «authentic» experience. We can then use this first listening experience diagnostically to assess the problems that they are having and what we need to do to overcome those problems. We can also gauge the degree to which they are succeeding with their listening and build on this.

But there are some problems with an authentic approach to listening. Students can easily be demotivated when faced by tasks or activities that are very difficult, particularly the first few times, but if you show them that you will gradually lead them

to an understanding of the authentic text, they will gradually start to relax more about dealing with more difficult texts. And once you have shown students a few times that they can gradually understand a challenging text, the, in the long run they will develop a much greater sense of achievement and experience far less stress when dealing with difficult situations in the real world. In the classroom many students expect us as their teachers to make things easy for them and to help them. This is also our instinct on seeing our students struggling, but we must try to resist this urge to do the work for them and help students to see that by doing the work for them we undermine their potential to achieve for themselves. [5, 4]

Conclusion

In conclusion, to learn a skill we need to bring all of ourselves to the task and we need to be in charge as much as possible so we search for what we need to do in order to master what we want to do. We have for some time been adopting this authentic approach in developing students' listening skills which is mentioned above, and while it does have its initial drawbacks for students that come from an educational culture that puts emphasis on testing and teacher dependence. If as teachers of English language we are prepared to persevere, in the long term we have found that the students do understand, appreciate and benefit from a more authentic listening experience.

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