

formative, since each text of the module transmits information about the economic realities according to the students specialty. It also proposes a set of questions to the text. Such questions are designed to determine the degree of comprehension and to practice vocabulary. These tasks (answering the question) can be performed as in the total frontal group work under the direct guidance and supervision of the tutor, and in the process of working in pairs and microgroups.

The tasks after the texts include various types of training activity: the term explanation in accordance with the definition proposed in the text; solving professional situations; discussion of domestic economic problems of our country's economic condition identical to English-speaking countries. The last step of working with a module ends presenting reports after the given professional tasks. Students demonstrate accumulated language, speech, communication stock gained while working on the module.

The information given above leads to the following conclusions:

- the structure of the textbook should correspond to the peculiarities of teaching masters of economics, promoting vocabulary assimilation in this sphere;
- the textbook must be focused on students, motivated, creative, intense, communicative and professional activities of student. English is as a part of communication in the economic sphere;
- the module structure of educational materials should improve digestibility of lexical units in the economic sphere and effectiveness of English communication of students.

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LISTENING PROBLEMS AND THEIR EFFECTIVE SOLUTIONS IN THE EFL CLASSROOM

Розглянуто деякі з основних труднощів аудіювання на заняттях з англійської мови як іноземної, які пов'язані з аудіотекстом та способом його подання, із відсутністю достатнього обсягу мовних і немовних знань аудитора та умовами сприйняття тексту. Пропонуються деякі ефективні рішення для подолання труднощів аудіювання.

Ключові слова: аудіювання як вид мовленнєвої діяльності, мовні труднощі аудіювання, автентичні матеріали, методично-автентичні матеріали, види робот, що характерні для передтекстового етапу роботи з аудіотекстом.

Рассмотрены некоторые из основных трудностей аудирования на занятиях по английскому языку как иностранному, которые связаны с аудiotекстом и способом

его подачи, с отсутствием достаточного объема языковых и неязыковых знаний аудитора и условиями восприятия текста. Предлагаются некоторые эффективные решения для преодоления трудностей аудирования.

Ключевые слова: аудирование как вид речевой деятельности, языковые трудности аудирования, аутентичные материалы, методически-аутентичные материалы, виды работ, характерные для предтекстового этапа работы с аудиотекстом.

Some of the most typical listening problems which may arise in the EFL classroom are considered, in particular those connected with the message to be listened to, the speaker, the listener and the physical setting. Some effective solutions to them are suggested.

Key words: listening comprehension, linguistic difficulties, authentic materials, learner-authentic materials, pre-listening activities.

Listening is one of the most important language skills to develop in terms of second language acquisition. All EFL teachers realize that if students were unable to communicate in the target language, the whole process of learning would be actually worthless. If learners do not listen effectively, they will be unable to communicate orally successfully. Thus effective listening is one of the most important language-learning abilities and therefore it is hardly possible to exaggerate the role of listening skills in communication.

Nowadays with more and more emphasis being shifted to communicative competence, both teachers and students have become aware of the importance of this communication skill. It is now beginning to receive more attention. In the past twenty years we have seen the publication of several major works, both practical and theoretical, specifically dealing with listening skills. Among them are works by M. Underwood [9], M. Rost [8], D. Mendelson and J. Rubin [6], G. White [11], P. Ur [10], L. Miller [7] and others, which give very accessible guidance for teachers by analyzing listening skills, proposing activities, classified according to the type of listening, with guiding notes and suggestions on how to increase learners' interaction and negotiation with recorded material.

Though the list of publications devoted to the problem of teaching listening comprehension to EFL students continues to grow yearly, there are still several aspects which require careful consideration. There is no denying that teaching listening comprehension is one of the most difficult tasks for EFL teachers. They must be careful not to go to extremes, either by being concerned too exclusively with theories without thinking about their application to teaching, or by obstinately following frozen routines – opening the textbook and explaining new words, playing the tape recorder, and asking or answering questions. It is essential for a teacher to have an overall understanding of what listening is, why it is difficult for foreign-language learners, and what some solutions may be [12, p. 189].

The purpose of this article is to treat some of the most typical listening problems that may arise in the EFL classroom and suggest some effective solutions to them. The author of this article believes that the evidence which shows why listening is difficult comes mainly from four sources: the message to be listened to, the speaker, the listener, and the physical setting.

The listening material may include situations unfamiliar to the student. Messages on the radio or recorded on tape cannot be listened to at a slower speed. Some phonetic phenomena make it difficult for students to recognize individual words in the stream of speech. According to S. Yu. Nikolayeva, phonetic difficulties that EFL students have to overcome are mainly linked with intonation, logical stress and speech tempo [1, p. 125]. They appear because the phonic systems of English and Ukrainian or Russian differ greatly. EFL teachers, therefore, should develop their learners' ear for English sounds and intonation. Lexical difficulties are closely connected with phonetic ones. Learners often misunderstand words because they hear them wrong. Besides, polysemantic words, homonyms, synonyms, antonyms, as well as colloquial words and expressions,

phrasal verbs and idioms that listening materials may contain present difficulties in listening comprehension. Grammatical difficulties are mostly connected with the analytical 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. All the above mentioned problems are classified as objective [3, p.152].

To help students deal with linguistic difficulties teachers should grade listening materials according to the students' level. The materials should progress step by step from semi- authenticity to total authenticity, because the final aim is to understand natural speech in real life. Authentic audio texts do not only demonstrate the functioning of the language in the form it is used by native speakers in its natural social context, they are also a very effective means for teaching students the culture of the country of the target language. EFL students should be provided with different kinds of input, such as radio news, films, TV plays, announcements, everyday conversations, interviews, English songs and so on. These listening materials are very motivating for language learners because they give them information about current world events and put them in touch with the world outside the confines of the classroom [11, p. 88]. Along with authentic audio materials simplified or learner-authentic materials are widely used in the English language classrooms. Like authentic audio texts, they are informative, different in style and subject matter as well as motivating. The usage of such texts can eliminate some listening problems, especially at the initial stage of instruction.

As authenticity can be viewed from different angles, listening tasks and activities should also be authentic stimulating listeners' cognitive interest. Good classroom activities can themselves be effective solutions to listening problems. It is desirable that teachers design task-oriented exercises to engage the students' interest, to encourage them to use different kinds of listening skills and strategies. Providing the students with some idea of what they are going to hear and what they are asked to do with it helps them to succeed in the task and increase their motivation. A number of preparatory non-communicative and relatively-communicative receptive exercises worked out by EFL teachers can help learners overcome phonetic, lexical and grammatical difficulties. All these language-based tasks will help learners to focus on the linguistic problems involved in listening so that students will leave the listening lesson better equipped in the future to deal with an area of language with greater competence than before [5, p. 29].

Some of these pre-listening activities are the following: presenting new words by means of explanation, definition, translation, guessing from context, synonyms, etc., checking students' understanding of new words in sentences taken from the audio text, working with some difficult grammatical structures that students may come across in the audio text, grouping words from the audio text on different topics, asking questions to some complicated sentences from the audio text, listening to some parts of the text that present some linguistic difficulties [2, p. 68–69].

Pre-listening activities prepare learners with language to use at the while- and post-listening stages. But presenting unknown words in order to remove barriers to understanding the passage, EFL teachers should not give their learners long lists of unknown words or long explanations as this will not help to listen naturally. Moreover, the list of words presented in pre-listening should not comprise only the words which may cause difficulties, but it should have some purpose in the total listening activity. For example, it can be a list on which certain words or phrases will be ticked, circled or underlined during the while-listening stage. This kind of activity removes the stress of suddenly hearing something forgotten and thus being distracted from the next part of the listening text. Finally, some words can be given on the blackboard or cards for learners to guess in what context they expect to hear them. Then at the while-listening stage they can compare what they have heard with their predictions in pre-listening.

Pre-listening work can consist of a wide range of activities that help learners to focus their minds on the topic, specifying and selecting the items that students expect to hear, and activating prior knowledge and language structures which have already been met. Such activities provide an opportunity to gain some knowledge which will help them to follow the listening text. According to F. Yagang, this knowledge not only provides encouragement but also develops students' confidence in their ability to deal with listening problems. He suggests a number of warm-up activities for the pre-listening stage, such as **discussion** about the topic which can be based on visuals or titles where students are encouraged to exchange their ideas or opinions about the topic, **brainstorming** where learners are asked to predict the words and expressions likely to appear in the passage, **games** for warming-up relaxation or for training in basic listening skills, **guiding questions** that help students exploit passages [12, p. 194-195]. The role of pre-listening activities can hardly be overestimated. According to psychologists' data the pre-listening stage, correctly organized and held, can increase the efficacy of perception by 25 %.

Another source of listening problems is the speaker. Redundancy is a natural feature of speech. Redundant utterances which may take the form of repetitions, false starts, rephrasing, self-corrections may be a hindrance for beginners. Learners also find it hard to understand speakers with other accents. In modern textbooks, students have to deal with a variety of British, American, Australian, Indian and even French accents. Natural dialogues are full of hesitations, pauses and uneven intonation. To overcome these problems teachers can give students practice in some phonetic phenomena in order to help them get used to the acoustic forms of rapid speech. Learners must be aware of different native-speaker accents. The best way to build up their ability to deal with different accents in the longer term is to encourage them to listen to a lot of English, for example TV without dubbing or BBC World Service Radio. Simple listening texts with little redundancy must be selected for lower-level students.

Listeners' problems are often explained by the lack of learners' sociocultural, factual and contextual knowledge of the target language. The task of the teacher is to provide learners with background and linguistic knowledge, such as complex sentence structures and colloquial words and expressions. It is also important for the listening-class teacher to give students immediate feedback on their performance. This not only promotes error correction but also provides encouragement. It can help students develop confidence in their ability to deal with listening problems [12, p. 194].

While listening, some EFL students try to understand every word. If they miss something, they feel they are failing and get worried and stressed. It is a very common problem, often unconsciously fostered by teachers or listening comprehension materials which encourage the learner to believe that everything that is said bears equally important information. The effort to understand everything often results in ineffective comprehension, as well as feelings of fatigue and failure. Teachers may need to give learners practice in selective ignoring of heard information – something they do naturally in their mother tongue [10, p. 111–112].

There are almost no occasions when the teacher will play a tape only once. Students will want to hear it again to pick up the things they missed the first time. Besides, teachers may want them to have a chance to study some of the language features on the tape. The first listening is often used just to give students an idea of what the listening material sounds like so that subsequent listenings (for detail or specific information) can be easier for students [4, 100]. But the fact remains that in real life they often have to cope with 'one-off' listening; and teachers can certainly make a useful contribution to their students' learning if they can improve their ability to do so. Teachers can, for instance, try to use texts that include 'redundant' passages and within which the essential information is presented more than once and not too intensively; and give learners the opportunity to request clarification or repetition during the listening [10, 112].

Listening problems caused by the physical setting (noise, including both background noises on the recording and environmental noises) can take the listener's mind off the content of the listening passage. Being able to cope with background noise is a skill that does not easily transfer from the native language and builds up along with students' listening and general language skills. It is advisable that EFL teachers choose a recording with no street noise at the initial stage of instruction. They can also boost learners' confidence by letting them listen to passages through earphones. When they start to get used to it, they should be given an additional challenge by using a recording with some background noise. Unclear sounds resulting from poor-quality equipment can interfere with the listener's comprehension. The teacher can help students cope with these difficulties by providing pleasant classroom conditions for listening.

To sum up, EFL teachers can provide their students with suitable listening materials, background and linguistic knowledge, enabling skills, pleasant classroom conditions, and useful exercises to help them discover effective listening strategies. But there are, of course, some more things about listening that need to be explored. Language teachers must find out all they can about how listening can be improved and then use this knowledge in their own classrooms.

As the purpose of this article is to consider some of the most typical listening problems that may arise in the EFL classroom and propose some effective solutions to them, the prospects of further research in this area could include some aspects of teaching listening to EFL students within the framework of communicative methodology with the main focus on communicative types of activities, in particular conversation exercises, role play and interchange activities, as well as the most effective ways EFL students are organized for work which satisfy the communicative principle in learning.

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