



THE ROLE OF LISTENING IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING.

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Abstract.

This article focuses on the role of listening in foreign language teaching. Proficiency in this type of speech activity—responding to spoken language—helps learners formulate accurate responses. In teaching listening comprehension, the levels of understanding and methods of assessing them play a crucial role. Comprehension at the word level is fragmentary and depends on the relationship between the listener's active, passive, and potential vocabulary, as well as their ability to utilize the determinative function of word combinations and context.

Keywords: Comprehension, listening, simple sentence, cognitive operations, syntactic feature, target text, main idea, level, assessment, exercises, final evaluation.

Listening forms the foundation of communication and is the starting point for mastering oral interaction. Proficiency in listening as a speech activity enables a person to understand messages conveyed to them and respond appropriately, aiding in the formulation of accurate replies. In teaching listening, the levels of comprehension and methods of assessing them play a significant role.

The goal of any assessment is to determine the extent to which students have developed their listening skills and how accurately and completely they have perceived a given audio text. The most well-known typology in this context is that of A.R. Luria, who identifies four levels of comprehension: the word level, the sentence level, the level of complex syntactic units (semantic chunks), and the text level. The primary distinctions between these levels lie in the depth and accuracy of comprehension, as well as the complexity of the cognitive operations performed by the listener.

Comprehension at the word level is fragmentary and depends on the relationship between the listener's active, passive, and potential vocabulary, as well as their ability to use the determinative function of phrases and context. Beginner listeners often recognize individual words and simple phrases, inferring the topic of the message based on these elements.

Sentence-level comprehension depends on syntactic features. Simple sentences pose no difficulty, as they are familiar and well-established units of spoken language. However, understanding the logical-grammatical structure of complex sentences presents a particular challenge. Cognitive operations in this case involve synthesizing individual elements and simultaneously grasping the entire sentence rather than processing it sequentially.

Comprehension of complex syntactic units involves segmenting the spoken message into parts, grouping them by meaning, identifying connectors between sentences within a semantic chunk, and determining its topic, development, and conclusion based on key

syntactic markers (e.g., inversion, introductory words, conjunctions at the beginning or end of a chunk, etc.).

Perception of an entire text depends on understanding the predicative connections between sentences, as they are the most stable and informative, as well as on the text's compositional-semantic structure, style, and genre. This typology of comprehension levels is valuable for developing predictive skills and tracking the complexity of forming formal and semantic hypotheses, though it is less practical for assessment organization.

It is also inappropriate to apply reading-based levels of perception to listening instruction, as auditory perception has its own unique characteristics. If we consider the criteria of completeness and accuracy of comprehension, we can adopt the three-level gradation proposed for lecture comprehension:

1. General awareness of the speaker's topic.
2. Understanding the subject matter.
3. Grasping the main idea, including the topic, content, and expressive means used.

Considering the gradual nature of comprehension, an alternative classification could be:

1. Fragmented (superficial) comprehension.
2. Global (general) comprehension.
3. Detailed (full) comprehension.
4. Critical comprehension.

Exercises assessing the depth and completeness of understanding should correspond to these levels, revealing even fragmented comprehension.

Detailed comprehension is evaluated through gap-filling tasks in a written summary of the listened text, where omissions vary in frequency based on learners' proficiency and text complexity (e.g., every 11th, 7th, or 3rd word).

Critical comprehension involves evaluating the content, identifying key information, commenting, and discussing—tasks that require understanding emotional-evaluative elements and relating content to the communication context.

When teaching listening, a structured sequence of exercises is essential. Pre-listening tasks may include identifying new elements, predicting the title, or recognizing specific details (numbers, dates, proper nouns).

Exercises requiring personal evaluation should follow those that focus on extracting explicit information, such as the author's attitude toward facts or characters. Beginners should start with exercises that do not demand verbal responses in the foreign language. Tasks teaching "factual comprehension" are easier than those requiring logical analysis and should be introduced first. The most challenging exercises—those involving critical assessment and inferring subtext—should conclude the sequence, as they rely on precise and thorough comprehension of facts and their interconnections.

Listening exercises can be either text-independent or text-based. The latter should include pre-listening tasks to focus attention and guide comprehension, as well as exercises accompanying the listening process.

A crucial component of listening exercises are those that simultaneously train listening and speaking skills.

For final assessments, key indicators include:

- Factual comprehension (accuracy and quantity of understood details).
- Depth of understanding.

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