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**Methods for managing the process of listening in a foreign**

**language teaching at the initial stage**

**Abstract.** This paper demonstrates the results of the research on the problem of improvements of listening skills at the initial stage. The aim of the research is to identify the main aspects of teaching listening on the basis of the study of all available sources and work experience in teaching listening at the initial stage and creation of effective activities to overcome the challenges in teaching a foreign language at the initial stage. The authors revealed the difficulties that primary school teachers face through a survey method and recommend use of various activities contribute children’s improvement of listening skills.

**Key words:** teaching English, listening, initial stage, methods, difficulties, activities,

Foreign language knowledge is becoming increasingly important in Kazakhstan, as it is in other parts of the world. Currently, knowledge of a foreign language is not only required for studying abroad, but it is also regarded as a determining factor of a specialist's competitiveness in the labor market. The President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, K.K. Tokayev, emphasized the importance of language knowledge, saying, “Taking into account global trends, special attention should be paid to such priority subjects as mathematics, languages, and computer science”.

The most recent reforms to Kazakhstan's education system have had an impact on all levels of schooling. These changes had an impact on primary schools as well. A foreign language is taught in schools beginning with the first year of study. The inclusion of a foreign language in the primary school curriculum is a response to practice challenges as the first stage in implementing the idea of trilingual education.

The primary school curriculum is based on principles such as inter-discipline relationships, which create situations for trilingual learning, require acquiring knowledge and competencies from simple to complex and from topic to topic, and shift the emphasis of educational goals to critical thinking goals.

There are numerous issues with teaching approaches in foreign language instruction. Traditional methods and techniques demonstrate a low ability to meet the demands of the new curriculum, and are not always accepted by school teachers. Teachers are expected to have more complex professional knowledge and skills, which contribute to meeting new challenges in the classroom.

Listening is one of the more difficult skills to teach in the English teaching methodology. Scholars, teachers, and foreign language teaching methodologists have been conducting a serious theoretical seeking in the study of listening, but work on teaching practice is currently being renewed, developed, and enhanced.

The necessity of creating new conditions for students studying a foreign language at the outset determines the relevance of this research. The search for new methods and techniques for teaching listening that improve the process of perception of foreign language speech is important. At the beginning, new methods and techniques for teaching listening skills help to pave the way for better understanding and improvement of students' listening skills.

The aim of the research is to identify the main aspects of teaching listening on the basis of the study of all available sources and work experience in teaching listening at the initial stage and creation of effective activities to overcome the challenges in teaching a foreign language at the initial stage.

Language is an essential mode of communication; human society cannot exist without it. Nowadays, new technologies and innovations are being introduced, all sectors of the economy are transitioning to a digital model, and human resource mobility is increasing. All of these changes necessitate an improvement in people's communicative competence, particularly their foreign language skills. The primary goal of learning a foreign language is to develop communicative competence, or the ability and willingness to engage in foreign interpersonal and intercultural communication with native speakers. English is one of the most important foreign languages. It should be noted that different researchers perceive the extent of the spread of the English language in global practice quite differently [2,3,4].

 Thus, in most cases, English language proficiency is considered one of the most important conditions for integration into the world community, an essential element of positive social changes, economic well-being and new technologies.

**As a result, there is currently a lot of emphasis on effective foreign language teaching and learning. It is obvious that learning a foreign language is a lengthy, difficult, and time-consuming process that necessitates knowledge of grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation. The transformation of a foreign language takes two forms: oral (listening and speaking skills) and written (reading and writing skills). Listening is the most closely related to speaking and is used frequently for a variety of linguistic purposes. Listening “requires listeners to make sense from the oral input by drawing on their background knowledge of the world and of the second language, as well as to generate information in their long term memory and to make their own meanings of the spoken passages** [5]. The statements above contradict the widely held belief that "listening comprehension is anything but a passive activity”. It is a complex, engaged procedure in which the listener must differentiate between sounds, understand vocabulary and grammatical structures, understand stress and intonation, retain what has been gathered, and interpret it within the immediate as well as larger sociocultural context of the utterance [6]. One should emphasize that listeners need to be active to receive information” [7].

The term “listening” (from Lat. audi re-listen, hear), was introduced into the methodology by the American psychologist Don Brown in the XX century. Listening is a meaningful understanding of auditory speech. It is a receptive type of speech activity and, first of all, is aimed at identifying, extracting and processing foreign-language information. Comparing the process of listening to the process of reading, he built the following logical chains for listening: We hear - we listen; we listen for reading; We see - we look - we read. The process of listening involves hearing, listening, recognizing spoken language and interpreting spoken characters, bringing them into characters.

 After his interpretation the term has been used in works on psychology and methodology of teaching foreign languages. Many studies have been conducted in the field of studying the process of auditory perception of speech, in which scientists have defined the concept of “listening”. Most researchers adhere to the definition given by Z.A. Kochkina: “Listening is the process of perception and understanding of audible speech”, making their own additions and clarifications to it [8]

The primary goal of learning English in primary school is to arouse children's curiosity about the world. Children can learn language in a variety of ways, including active games, songs, poems, project work, and so on. English teachers at the primary level can help children develop an awareness of language and encourage a love of language learning in their early years. This will also boost children's confidence and lay the groundwork for future development.

In order to explore the situation how listening is taught at the initial stage we have conducted a anonymous survey among English teachers designed through Google Form. The main goal of this survey was to study the condition of teaching listening in English at the initial stage. The survey was developed on the basis of research method on “Difficulties That English Teachers Encounter while Teaching Listening Comprehension and Their Attitudes towards them” by A.I. Alrawashdeh [9].

We are demonstrating the results of the questions about the methods that teachers use, effectiveness of textbooks and the difficulties they face at the initial stage.

We categorized the answers for the question “What methods do you use in order to develop your students’ listening skills?” according to their variety.

 Table 1 Teachers’ responses on methods

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Methods** | **Video** | **Activities** | **Materials** | **Some other answers** |
| audio | films | games | tongue twisters | I don’t know |
| visual | cartoons | dictation | phonetic exercises | My students have problems with listening |
| direct | dialogues | reading aloud  | texts | It is difficult to understand  |
| translation | podcasts | questionnaire | songs |  |
| collaborative |  | pre listening, while listening, post listening activities | vocabulary |  |
| communicative |  | tests |  |  |
|  |  | Filling in the gap |  |  |

From these respondents’ answers we could interpret that teachers use a large quantity of activities in order to teach listening at the initial stage. Moreover, they incorporate different kinds of video and audio materials. Nevertheless, there were answers such as I don’t know, students have problems with listening. We think that even though teachers use different kinds of activities and materials for teaching listening at the initial stage there are still problems in this field of teaching.

The answers for the question “How effective are the methods offered by textbook authors to develop your students’ listening skills?” are in the following diagram.

 **Figure 1 Teachers’ answers to effectiveness of methods**

**offered in the textbook**

According to teachers’ opinions textbook methods contribute children’s listening skills, but not fully.10 % of teachers think that they would create their own exercises.

 The question of our survey “Which of these difficulties do you meet when you conduct listening activities for your primary schoolchildren?” was connected with the difficulties teachers face while teaching at the initial stage. Teachers listed the main problems they encounter when they teach listening at the initial stage.

 **Figure 2 Teachers’ difficulties in listening activities**

This diagram shows that the most important obstacle in teaching listening at the initial stage is that textbooks do not cover the cartoon materials and the textbook has the same task for all the lessons.

 From this survey we revealed that most teachers suppose that all four skills are important in teaching at the initial stage. Teachers use different kinds of materials and activities in teaching listening. Most teachers think that methods offered in the textbook are appropriate and helpful, but they do not meet all children’s needs in order to improve children’s listening skills at the initial stage. As for difficulties most teachers think that textbooks do not contain the updated materials from the cartoons or other sources that students are interested in. Moreover, they believe that textbooks contain repetitive tasks for listening skills.

We believe that use of various activities would contribute the development of children’s listening skills. Here are some examples of interactive activities.

1. **Listen and number the sounds you hear:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| b - d |  |
| s – z |  |
|  ᵟ ᶿ |  |
|  t – d |  |
|  g – k |  |

2**. Listen and circle the words that contain [I:]**

meet

team

two

eat

it

three

**3.Listen and raise your hand**

1.Listen to the words and raise your hands if you listen to the name food

thirteen, cake, burgers, eleven, small, rice, teeth, heart, ugly, apples, bread

2.Listen to the words and raise your hands if you listen to the fruit

Sandwich, fifty, apples, bananas, potatoes, pizza, sweets, eggs

3.Listen to the words and raise your hands if you listen to the vegetable

Sandwich, fifty, apples, bananas, potatoes, pizza, sweets, eggs, tomatoes

4. Listen to the words and raise your hands if you listen to toys

Dall, kite, potatoes, mouse, robot, dragon, apples, teddy bear

5. Listen to the words and raise your hands if you listen to the numbers

Ten, memory, fifteen, cake, twenty, three, thirteen, skateboard, computer, five

**4.Write down the words that match the pictures.**



**5.Listen to the text and mark the sentences T (True) or F (False).**

-I’ve got a new friend. This is Damir with his teddy. He’s got curly hair.

* Yes, he’s got blue eyes. My new friend is Temirlan. He’s got curly hair too. But he hasn’t got blue eyes.
* Look over there. It’s Temirlan. He is with Damir.
* They are friends too.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| № | Sentences | True | False |
| 1 | Damir has got curly hair. |  |  |
| 2 | Temirlan hasn’t got curly hair.  |  |  |
| 3 | Damir has a teddy. |  |  |
| 4 | Temirlan and Damir are not friends.  |  |  |

**6.Activities for cartoons**

Watch the Despicable Me – It’s so funny and do the tasks

Pre Listening

Learn new vocabulary Professor, toys, how much, how many, space killer

While listening

Students have to watch and write the words they know

Post listening

Answer the questions

1.How much is a toy?

2.How many children are playing?

3.Who is a space killer?

Watch Scoobi Doo Movie and do the tasks

Pre Listening

Learn new vocabulary pizza, sandwich, Scooby Doo, mystery

While listening

Students have to watch and write the words they understand

Post listening

Answer the questions

1.What is the movie about?

2.What’s the dog’s name?

3.What’s the dog’s last name?

Summing up the analysis of the methodology of teaching listening, it should be emphasized that listening in a foreign language is one of the skills that cannot be formed once and for all. It requires constant training with the use of ever-increasing complexity of the material and in conditions of increasing difficulty. Ever yone ne eds to fi nd an d us e th e me th ods an d te ch ni ques that wi ll be most effective in their work. In our study, we have presented only one view of the solution to this problem.

According to the results of the survey conducted with primary school teachers, most teachers believe that all four skills are essential iin the early stages of teaching. In order to teach listening, teachers use a variety of resources and exercises. Most teachers believe that the textbook approaches are appropritae and benefecial, but they do not fulfill all of the children’s expectations in order to develop children’s listening abilities at the beginning of their school careers. As a result of the conducted research and the study of the experience of methodologists who deal with the problem, a set of exercises was developed for the development of auditory skills and abilities at the initial stage of training. A series of activities for the improvement of listening skills and abilities at the initial stage of training was created.

The study demonstrated the efficiency of the offered listening activities in teaching children basic listeing skills. Our study on the improvement of communication skills and abilities across a series of listening teaching activities contributes to the ability to conduct listening teachingat the initial stage effectively. However, we are aware that not all the tasks we have set have been solved equally deeply and thoroughly. Furthet research into the method of improving skills and ablities of litesiing of students at the initial stage seem to be prospective in this research.

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