

LISTENING SKILLS IMPROVEMENT OF STUDENTS OF TECHNICAL SPECIALITIES

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The basic, fundamental function of any language is communicative: the function which allows speakers to share information, knowledge, perceptions. Communication, in its turn is a complex process which requires not only certain speaking ability but, at the same time, ability to comprehend spoken message, thus, involves listening.

Dalai Lama once said: When you talk, you are only repeating what you already know. But if you listen, you may learn something new.

Listening comprehension is one of the most crucial and, at the same time, the most challenging activity at the seminars in technical institutions. The matter of listening skills improvement was investigated to a greater or lesser extent by the following scientists: V.V. Chernysh, Z.O. Kochkina, A.Anderson, T.Lynch, J.Harmer, N.V. Elukhina etc. Still, there are certain peculiarities in technical listening comprehension.

Mostly, while practising listening, the lecturer provides students with pre-listening tasks in the form of discussion or vocabulary revision, content anticipation, shares new vocabulary that might occur in the text. The next stage contains listening process itself and, finally, the post-listening tasks that require correct answers that are, typically, represented in exact figures, dates, quantities, names. This approach is, to some extent, mathematical, since it provides lecturer with precise percentage of correct answers, though, it does not reveal the whole complexity of listening activity, it just highlights the challenging areas to work over.

The suggestion is that every script that is prepared for listening activity should be thoroughly scanned by the provider. Considering the English level inhomogeneity and different professional competences of students of technical faculties, the teacher is the one to smooth the situation and provide equal opportunities for listening skills improvement.

The specifics of technical text in comparison with general English texts is the words of Latin and Greek origins at the lexical level, passive versus active voices, conditionals, past simple versus present perfect, reported speech at the grammatical level, narratives, rhetorical questions, complex sentences at syntactical level and even more elements which can vary depending on the branch of science.

This fact presupposes the development of concrete grammatical, lexical, intonation, syntactical and, definitely, professional competences. The purpose of pre-listening activity is to make listening less stressful for the recipient, students. Rather than to provide the full list of new vocabulary, the lecturer may want to revise necessary for listening comprehension grammar, or focus on proper reading of complex numbers, units of measurement, go over linking words that serve for contract, intensification, comparison, purpose statement, coherence.

Though, the majority of texts for listening or watching mainly contain the description of material, product, device features and functions, history of creation of certain innovation or the process, or a part of a lecture, dialogues on technical subjects, professional experience narration, which apparently refer to formal or, at least, semi-formal styles, we do have to mind the peculiarities of speaker's pronunciation, intonation, pause or even sometimes speech defects. Definitely, the students should be ready to face those discrepancies in classical pronunciation patterns. An advisable way to polish those pre-skills is to show the contrast between the generally accepted, correct pronunciation approach and the actual speech.

Fortunately or not, with a rapid change in technology, language teacher, should demonstrate a quite reactive and act as a resource, providers of the latest data and innovation. Surely, it takes a while to introduce new material in textbooks and practice files. Moreover, listening/watching is becoming more and more popular among young generation since it only. Thus, teachers facilitate students not only in English level improvement, but also they assist in professional growth and development.

Taking into consideration that English is an analytical language unlike Ukrainian we have to keep in mind that the way native speakers build up their ideas is far too different. Teaching and learning functions is another inevitable ingredient to foster English listening skills improvement. Functions or so-called 'useful language' would help the technical students to find similarities with already known material and new information they are receiving through the language. It might seem slightly manipulative but that approach helps the students to react on the message more actively and, which is more important, subconsciously.

Acquiring word formation pattern is another key element that embraces confidence while listening. Due to learning meanings of prefixes and studying grammatical functions of suffixes, students are able to understand the sense of the sentences, word-combinations and interpret their concept, identify the interaction between words.

Thus, listening skills improvement of students of technical specialities requires practice in different areas of language learning process. The teacher is expected to analyse the script and specify the biggest listening challenges. As a result, a set of pre-listening activities should refer to the major obstacle to the complete listening comprehension which, in its turn, will build students' confidence, expand their knowledge of the subject and, finally, improve listening skills.

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