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THE INTERNET AS A WAY TO TEACH LISTENING IN HIGH SCHOOL

Abstract: This article considers the ways of expanding the possibilities for a foreign language teacher via various Internet-based resources. The author describes different types of listening and tries to explain why online resources can be a benefit in teaching listening.

Keywords: listening, Internet resources, foreign language, comprehension, types of listening.

The development of receptive skills, such as listening is a difficult task, which requires a great deal of time, involvement and effort. It appears to be particularly important for language teachers to plan lessons thoughtfully and select captivating tasks in order to motivate students to listen to the target language not only during classes but also outside the classroom. That is why it seems to be essential to use modern technology and the Internet as much as possible to teach this skill as they facilitate autonomy and offer a great deal of Web resources with interesting interactive materials [8].

Not only is it an important skill for learning languages, but also listening is vital for successful communication and relationship development.

Nowadays, there are a number of various internet resources that play a crucial role in teaching listening comprehension. This article seeks to explore the different sides of listening, how to teach this skill to foreign language learners, and the benefits of implementing internet resources into the educational process [5].

Listening can be determined in different ways. "To listen is to assign meaning to the stimuli received from the brain" [3, p. 31]. "Listening is an active, conscious process that requires pattern recognition and differencing. Humans comprehend through filters of personal experience such as culture, values, beliefs, and intentions" [8, p. 174].

Comprehension depends on the knowledge of syntax. This means that oral language must be separated into distinctive chunks in order to be understood.

It is necessary to be able to divide these chunks into packets of clauses and phrases as well as real-world experience to understand the purpose of one's speech by working out the speaker's diction, pace, tone, and intonation.

T. Hedge identified five types of listening used in various situations:

- 1) discriminative, having an awareness of the speaker's mood and intention;
- 2) comprehensive, for understanding and learning;
- 3) critical/evaluative, for making a decision and assessing the logic of what we hear;
- 4) therapeutic, showing empathy without judgment and helping others feel better;
- 5) appreciative, for enjoyment and relaxation [3].

According to C.R. Jack, humans use listening to a bigger extent in comparison with any other communication skill – 40-50% of their total time communicating as compared with 25-30% speaking, 11-16% reading, and 9% writing [5].



However, C. Herron and I. Seay mentioned that there are two basic reasons why the community is losing their ability to listen effectively [4]. First of all, the need for accurate listening has disappeared because we have plenty of written, audio, and video recording devices. It is not necessary to remember what is heard if we can look it up later. Secondly, the world has become a cacophony with auditory and visual overstimulation. The researcher implies that personal broadcasting has replaced conversation and that an abundance of screaming headlines has deterred society from distinguishing the significant from the background noise. Working on and improving listening skills, therefore, help learners to become better connected to their world.

Originally, listening in the language classroom has been a model for speech production, but recent developments in research and education policy has changed it into more of an end in itself. This shift demonstrates M. Berman's discovery that language learners have difficulties with distinguishing sounds in a foreign language because their native tongue does not articulate the same sounds [1]. Moreover, language learners also have trouble with comprehending lexical units and idioms if there are not the same or similar examples in their native language. In order to assimilate, the learner must experience the sounds in a variety of contexts and situations. "Technology, the Internet in particular, is beneficial to this end because it includes an abundance of settings and, furthermore, because listening and visual comprehension are interdependent" [7, p. 207]. Visual support such as body language, facial expressions, posture, and environment interact with sound to form meaning, and students can practice interpreting these throughout web-based resources.

The Internet provides materials that might be used for listening instruction. It is crucial to remember, however, that their implementation into the lessons requires careful evaluation of such factors as learners' motivation, authenticity, relevance and interest, appropriateness of topics, newsworthiness and length. Furthermore, the choice of online resources should also include the flexibility of the tasks, the possibility of correlating online resources with numerous needs of learners, and the multiplicity of themes. Yet other important issues related to installation of online listening resources for foreign language instruction include: the question of audio/video delivery, the issue of formats and audio/video players that support them as well as extra activities, visual support and evaluation of EFL listening quizzes [8].

One example of listening materials available on the Internet is podcasts that can be briefly described as audio delivered from a website via an RSS feed and stored on a computer hard drive or portable player to be listened to at any time [6]. Podcasts provide many advantages for teaching listening such as out-of-school extension of the target language, which also facilitates learners' chances of successful further comprehension and production. Besides, podcasts are suitable for repetition and revision of the listening material, which learners can perform when it is comfortable for them. Finally, podcasts offer the possibility of playing audio at any convenient speed for better comprehension [2].

Additionally, there is one more interesting approach to teaching listening which is represented by opportunities to create Web-based language activities by teachers or even learners themselves by means of authoring tools and some computer programs such as Hot Potatoes, TexToys, QuizFaber or Audacity. This method helps with students' motivation and gives them a chance to try something new during their English lessons.

In conclusion, the use of text to speech (TTS) technology can be successfully implemented into the educational process. Some Web pages such as vozMe, Acapela Text to Speech or IVONA allow the user to convert a text to speech in a few steps. It is noticeable that such tasks help students to distinguish various words and phrases if they experience some difficulties because they still have visual support. What is also of great significance, TTS technology may assist learners with learning disabilities or learning disorders.



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