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ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING: DEVELOPMENT OF RECEPTIVE LANGUAGE SKILLS

Language is an instrument for communication and human beings practice it for getting and conveyance information. The language learner/user's communicative language competence is activated in the performance of the various language activities, involving reception, production, interaction or mediation (in particular interpreting or translating). Each of these types of activity is possible in relation to texts in oral or written form or both [2, 26].

Communication can be oral or written, oral communication includes listening and speaking and written communication encompasses reading and writing. These skills are grouped in the following way: reading and listening are receptive skills as they are used in receiving information and speaking and writing are productive skills as they are useful for producing and conveying information.

As processes, reception and production (oral and/or written) are obviously primary, since both are required for interaction.

Receptive activities include silent reading and following the media. They are also of importance in many forms of learning (understanding course content, consulting textbooks, works of reference and documents). Productive activities have an important function in many academic and professional fields (oral presentations, written studies and reports) and particular social value is attached to them (judgements made of what has been submitted in writing or of fluency in speaking and delivering oral presentations) [5, 23].

It is worth mentioning that both receptive and productive skills do not take place simultaneously. Listening precedes speaking and reading precedes writing. Making the best use of receptive and productive skills depends upon the high magnitude of determination.

We aim to investigate the process of receptive skills creation and development.

Auditory and visual analyzers function in the receptive types of speech activity and verbal-auditory analyzers work in productive speech activity. Accordingly, receptive types of speech activity are determined by the peculiarities of the auditory and visual perception, and productive types are caused by a complex scheme of verbal expression and speech programs [1, 34].

Receptive speech activity carries out the perception and the subsequent processing of the voice message. It includes listening and reading. Listening is the secondary kind of speech activity in communication, but we cannot refer it to a passive one. The activity of a listener concerning processing and understanding information needs many efforts and takes no less intensity than in speaking and writing.

An essential and integral component of receptive activities – listening and reading – is understanding. First of all, it is the understanding of words, phrases, phraseological units, etc. It is the process of comparison of form and meaning and then the understanding of the content, meaning and core idea of the read or heard text. Understanding is a complex human mental activity. The reader or listener not only gets ready information, but also compares it with his own experience and knowledge.

The following factors affect the understanding of a text:

- information density of a text;
- compositional and logical structure of a text;

- language realization and expression of logical, emotional and volitional information in a text;
- correlation between vocabulary, grammar and speech of a reader/ listener and text vocabulary, grammar and style;
- reader`s experience, including his/her aesthetic tastes and habits;
- attention focusing on the perception of a text;
- peculiarities of perception, memory, thinking and imagination of a reader / listener;
 - individual and psychological characteristics of a reader / listener (age, temperament)/3, 105].

Some of these factors are connected with a text, the others – with a reader. They should be taken into account in the selection process of educational texts and the organization of the teaching process. Listening and reading have common mechanisms: short-term and long-term memory, probabilistic forecasting, understanding, inner speech, speech hearing. The structure of both listening and reading as a psychological process has a certain similarity; it is reflected in the processes of recognition, comprehension and understanding. While reading or listening, a person should produce such mental operations as analysis and synthesis, abstraction and concretization, comparison and distinction, to establish cause-and-effect relationships etc.[4, 97]. All these operations are connected with a text. In “Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment” we can find the following definition of a text. “Text is any sequence or discourse (spoken and/or written) related to a specific domain and which in the course of carrying out a task becomes the occasion of a language activity, whether as a support or as a goal, as product or process” [5, 19].

The similarity of the psychological characteristics of the listening and reading (the structure, content, speech mechanisms), similar communication units of listener and reader, considerable coincidence of language and speech materials for teaching these types of speech activity determine the need for an interconnected teaching of listening and reading.

This interconnected relationship should be taken into account in the process of creation of communicative tasks, aimed at development of receptive skills.

The following skills of semantic processing of the voice message are common for listening and reading:

- to forecast the theme and content of the voice message on the basis of situational and contextual information;
- to understand the subject of the voice message;
- to divide the voice message into meaningful parts;
- to understand the common logical plan– to establish logical relations between semantic parts of the message;
- to understand both general content and details of the message;
- to understand the emotional and evaluative relationships of the message;
- to understand the subtext of the message and interpret its contents;
- to understand the basic content of the message, despite the unfamiliar language units;
- to separate the new information from the known information;
- to define general sense, main idea and intentions of the author of the message;
- to draw conclusions on the basis of the heard or read messages;

For the formation of these skills, students may be offered the following communicative tasks:

- listen to / read the introduction of the text and express the opinion about its subject (content);
- look at the illustrations to the text and try to determine its theme (content);
- listen to / read the following word combinations and describe the situations where they can be used;
- listen to / read the beginning of the text and think up its continuation;

- listen to / read the title of the text, its plan, key words and phrases and guess what is this text about;
- listen to / read the text and choose from the proposed illustrations those that are the most relevant with its subject;
- listen to/ read two texts and determine the identity or difference of their themes;
- listen to / read the text and choose from the proposed titles one that is the most suitable;
- listen to / read the text and give the title;
- listen to / read the text and draw up a plan;
- divide the text into concept parts taking into account their logical, semantic and syntactic features;
- place the illustrations to the text in a logical sequence;
- correct mistakes in the proposed plan in accordance with the logic of the text;
- to find a place in the text where proposed additional information can be placed;
- listen to / read the two versions of the text and find out what was added / changed in the second variant;
- listen to / read some sentences and tell which of them correspond or do not correspond to the content of the text;
- listen to / read the text and answer the questions;
- listen to / read the part of the text containing unknown words and phrases and answer questions using language guess, reliance on context and situation, probabilistic forecasting;
- listen to / read the text and try to understand what famous figure or event it is about (the events and the names of the heroes are not mentioned in the text);

There is a wide variety of tasks aimed at development of the receptive skills of communicative activity. The maximum attention is to be paid to the needs of students. Psychological characteristics of speech activities and peculiarities of their functioning in real communication should be taken into account.

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