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SCIENTIFIC AND THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS OF TRAINING FUTURE NATIVE LANGUAGE TEACHERS TO DEVELOP LISTENING COMPREHENSION SKILLS

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Abstract: This article examines the scientific and theoretical foundations of training future native language teachers to develop listening comprehension skills among learners. Listening comprehension is considered a fundamental component of communicative competence, closely connected with speaking, reading, writing, critical thinking, and linguistic awareness. The study analyzes the pedagogical, psychological, and methodological principles underlying the development of listening skills in native language education. Particular attention is paid to the role of future teachers in selecting authentic listening materials, designing effective learning activities, applying interactive methods, and assessing learners' listening comprehension. The article emphasizes the importance of integrating modern pedagogical technologies and learner-centered approaches into teacher education to improve the effectiveness of listening instruction.

Keywords: future teachers, native language education, listening comprehension, communicative competence, teacher training, listening skills, pedagogical technologies, interactive methods, language learning, assessment.

Introduction

In the modern education system, the development of students' communicative competence is one of the most important objectives of language teaching. Effective communication requires not only the ability to express ideas clearly but also the ability to understand spoken information, interpret meaning, identify the speaker's intentions, and respond appropriately. In this context, listening comprehension occupies a central position in the process of language acquisition and communication.

For future native language teachers, the ability to organize and conduct effective listening activities is an essential professional competence. Teachers must understand the theoretical foundations of listening comprehension, recognize the linguistic and psychological factors influencing it, and apply appropriate methodological approaches in classroom practice. Therefore, preparing future teachers to work systematically on learners' listening skills is an important component of professional teacher education.

Listening comprehension is a complex cognitive and linguistic process involving the perception of speech sounds, recognition of words and grammatical structures, interpretation of meaning, activation of background knowledge, and analysis of contextual information. Consequently, listening instruction should not be limited to simply hearing a text. It should involve purposeful activities that help learners understand, analyze, evaluate, and interpret spoken communication.

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The purpose of this article is to analyze the scientific and theoretical foundations of training future native language teachers to develop listening comprehension skills and to identify pedagogical approaches that can improve the effectiveness of listening instruction.

Theoretical Foundations of Listening Comprehension

Listening comprehension is generally understood as an active process in which a listener receives spoken information, processes linguistic signals, and constructs meaning. Unlike passive hearing, listening requires attention, memory, prediction, interpretation, and the integration of new information with previously acquired knowledge.

From a psycholinguistic perspective, listening comprehension involves several interconnected processes. First, the listener perceives acoustic signals and distinguishes speech sounds. Second, the listener identifies words and grammatical structures. Third, the listener interprets the relationships between linguistic units and determines the overall meaning of the message. Finally, the listener evaluates the information in relation to the communicative situation and personal knowledge.

Listening comprehension can be examined through two complementary processes: bottom-up and top-down processing. Bottom-up processing involves recognizing sounds, words, phrases, and grammatical structures to construct meaning. Top-down processing involves using context, prior knowledge, expectations, and situational information to interpret spoken messages. Effective listening instruction should combine both processes.

For example, when listening to a narrative, students may identify unfamiliar vocabulary and sentence structures while simultaneously predicting subsequent events based on the title, context, and their existing knowledge. Such activities strengthen linguistic awareness and develop the ability to understand spoken texts independently.

The theoretical foundations of listening instruction are also associated with the communicative approach to language education. According to this approach, language is learned most effectively when it is used to achieve meaningful communicative purposes. Listening tasks should therefore reflect real-life situations, including conversations, interviews, discussions, announcements, narratives, and presentations.

The development of listening comprehension skills depends on several pedagogical and psychological factors. Among the most important are learners' attention, auditory memory, vocabulary knowledge, linguistic competence, motivation, and ability to infer meaning from context.

Attention enables learners to focus on essential information and distinguish it from irrelevant details. Auditory memory helps them retain spoken information long enough to interpret relationships between ideas. Vocabulary and grammatical knowledge support the recognition and interpretation of linguistic structures, while background knowledge allows learners to anticipate content and understand implicit meanings.

Motivation is another important factor. Learners are more likely to participate actively in listening activities when the materials are relevant to their interests, educational needs, and everyday

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experiences. Therefore, future teachers should select listening materials that correspond to learners' age, language proficiency, cultural background, and cognitive abilities.

The following pedagogical principles are particularly significant in listening instruction:

Purposefulness. Each listening activity should have a clearly defined objective, such as identifying the main idea, locating specific information, understanding a speaker's attitude, or determining the sequence of events.

Accessibility and gradual progression. Listening materials should be selected according to learners' existing abilities. Tasks can gradually progress from understanding familiar words and general meaning to interpreting complex arguments and implied information.

Integration of language skills. Listening should be connected with speaking, reading, and writing. For example, after listening to a text, learners may summarize its content, discuss its central idea, write a response, or compare spoken information with a written passage.

Active learner participation. Learners should not remain passive recipients of information. They should predict content, formulate questions, take notes, identify key points, and evaluate the information they hear.

Reflection and feedback. Learners should be encouraged to identify the difficulties they experienced during listening and develop strategies for overcoming them.

These principles provide a theoretical basis for preparing future native language teachers to organize purposeful, systematic, and learner-centered listening activities.

The methodological preparation of future native language teachers should include knowledge of listening strategies, instructional techniques, task design, and assessment methods. One effective approach is to organize listening instruction into three stages: pre-listening, while-listening, and post-listening.

Pre-listening activities prepare learners for understanding the text. At this stage, teachers may introduce key vocabulary, discuss the topic, present relevant images, ask prediction questions, or activate learners' background knowledge.

For example, before listening to a text about environmental protection, the teacher may ask students to discuss environmental problems in their community. This activity activates prior knowledge and provides a meaningful context for interpreting the forthcoming text.

Future teachers should learn to use pre-listening tasks purposefully without revealing all the information contained in the listening material.

While-listening activities help learners focus on specific information and monitor their understanding. Depending on the instructional objective, students may identify the main idea, complete missing information, arrange events in chronological order, determine whether statements are true or false, or match speakers with their opinions.

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Repeated listening can also be useful. During the first listening, learners may identify the general meaning, while the second listening can focus on details, vocabulary, or relationships between ideas. However, the number of repetitions should depend on the task's difficulty and the learners' needs.

Future teachers should be trained to design tasks that assess actual comprehension rather than merely the ability to remember isolated words.

Post-listening activities consolidate understanding and connect listening with other language skills. Learners may summarize the text, discuss its central message, express their opinions, answer analytical questions, or prepare a written response.

These activities are particularly important in native language education because they encourage learners to analyze the content and structure of spoken communication. They also support the development of critical thinking, oral expression, and interpretative skills.

For future teachers, the ability to design coherent activities across all three stages is an important indicator of methodological competence.

The professional preparation of future native language teachers should combine theoretical knowledge with practical methodological experience. Teacher education programs need to provide opportunities for students to analyze listening materials, develop lesson plans, conduct microteaching sessions, and evaluate the effectiveness of their instructional decisions.

First, future teachers should develop a clear understanding of the nature and components of listening comprehension. They need to distinguish between tasks aimed at understanding the general meaning and tasks requiring detailed comprehension, interpretation, or evaluation.

Second, they should acquire the ability to select and adapt listening materials. Appropriate materials may include literary passages, interviews, dialogues, public announcements, educational podcasts, oral narratives, and recordings of discussions. In native language education, literary and culturally relevant materials can help learners develop linguistic awareness while becoming familiar with the expressive possibilities of their language.

Third, future teachers should learn to formulate questions at different cognitive levels. Questions may focus on factual information, relationships between ideas, the speaker's purpose, the reliability of information, or the interpretation of implied meaning. Such differentiation enables teachers to address the needs of learners with varying levels of comprehension.

Fourth, teacher training should incorporate reflective practice. After conducting a listening lesson, future teachers should analyze learners' responses, identify the most difficult parts of the material, evaluate the appropriateness of the selected tasks, and make necessary adjustments.

Microteaching, peer assessment, lesson observation, and teaching practice can provide effective opportunities for developing these competencies. Through such activities, future teachers move from understanding theoretical concepts to applying them in realistic educational situations.

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Digital technologies provide additional opportunities to improve listening comprehension instruction. Audio and video recordings, digital learning platforms, interactive exercises, electronic dictionaries, and speech-processing tools can make listening activities more accessible and varied.

Authentic audio and video materials expose learners to natural speech, different speaking styles, intonation patterns, pauses, and contextual cues. Subtitles and transcripts can be used as supplementary resources when necessary, although their use should correspond to the instructional objective. For example, an initial listening task without a transcript may encourage learners to focus on auditory information, while a subsequent transcript analysis can help them identify unfamiliar expressions or misunderstandings.

Interactive technologies also allow teachers to provide immediate feedback and monitor individual progress. Online quizzes, audio-based assignments, and digital portfolios can support formative assessment and encourage independent learning.

Nevertheless, technology should be used as a means of achieving pedagogical objectives rather than as an end in itself. Future teachers must evaluate the linguistic quality, educational relevance, accessibility, and reliability of digital materials before using them in the classroom.

Assessment is an essential component of listening instruction because it helps teachers determine whether learners have achieved the intended learning outcomes. Effective assessment should evaluate different dimensions of comprehension rather than rely exclusively on factual recall.

Listening comprehension may be assessed through several criteria:

- understanding the main idea and purpose of a spoken text;
- identifying specific information and relevant details;
- recognizing the sequence and logical relationships between ideas;
- interpreting vocabulary and expressions in context;
- identifying the speaker’s attitude, intention, or point of view;
- drawing conclusions and making reasonable inferences;
- summarizing and responding appropriately to spoken information.

Teachers may use multiple-choice questions, short-answer tasks, information-completion exercises, oral summaries, sequencing activities, and analytical discussions. The choice of assessment method should reflect the learning objective and the complexity of the material.

Formative assessment is especially important because it enables teachers to identify learners’ difficulties during the learning process. Feedback should indicate not only whether an answer is correct but also which listening strategies learners can use to improve their performance.

Future teachers should also be prepared to interpret assessment results carefully. Difficulties in listening may arise from limited vocabulary, unfamiliar accents, rapid speech, insufficient background

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knowledge, weak concentration, or the complexity of the task. Identifying the underlying cause helps teachers select appropriate instructional interventions.

Discussion

The analysis of the scientific and theoretical foundations of listening instruction demonstrates that listening comprehension is a multidimensional competence involving linguistic, cognitive, psychological, and communicative processes. Consequently, preparing future native language teachers to develop this competence requires an integrated approach that combines theoretical study, methodological training, practical teaching, and reflective evaluation.

An important methodological implication is that listening activities should be organized systematically rather than presented as isolated exercises. Pre-listening preparation, purposeful listening tasks, and post-listening reflection create conditions for deeper comprehension and more effective language learning.

Another significant implication is the need to differentiate listening tasks according to their objectives. Understanding the main idea, identifying details, interpreting implied meanings, and evaluating a speaker's position require different strategies and levels of cognitive engagement. Future teachers should therefore be able to select appropriate tasks and gradually increase their complexity.

Furthermore, the integration of listening with speaking, reading, and writing creates opportunities for learners to use information in meaningful ways. When learners listen to a text, analyze its content, discuss its implications, and formulate their own responses, listening becomes an active process of knowledge construction.

The professional development of future teachers should also emphasize assessment literacy. Teachers need to understand how to design valid listening tasks, interpret learner performance, provide constructive feedback, and adapt their teaching according to the results. These competencies are essential for ensuring that listening instruction contributes to the broader objectives of native language education.

Conclusion

The scientific and theoretical foundations of training future native language teachers to develop listening comprehension skills are based on the integration of linguistic, psycholinguistic, pedagogical, and methodological principles. Listening comprehension is an active cognitive process that requires the recognition of linguistic information, interpretation of meaning, activation of background knowledge, and evaluation of spoken communication.

The effectiveness of listening instruction depends on the purposeful organization of pre-listening, while-listening, and post-listening activities; the appropriate selection of materials; the integration of language skills; the application of interactive and digital technologies; and the use of systematic assessment.

To improve the professional preparation of future native language teachers, teacher education programs should strengthen the connection between theoretical knowledge and practical teaching

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experience. Particular attention should be given to designing listening tasks, selecting authentic materials, differentiating instruction, assessing comprehension, and reflecting on teaching outcomes.

In conclusion, systematic preparation of future teachers to work on listening comprehension can contribute to the development of learners' communicative competence, linguistic awareness, independent learning, and critical engagement with spoken information. This process should be regarded as an integral component of the professional and methodological training of future native language teachers.

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