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DEVELOPING LISTENING SKILLS VIA LEARN ENGLISH TEENS RESOURCES

Abstract. Currently, foreign language teachers have a wide arsenal of tools for effective and interesting teaching of a foreign language. In order to arouse students' interest in learning a foreign language and diversify the educational process, it is necessary to go beyond the recommended educational and methodological complex and use additional materials, including electronic resources posted on the Internet. This research considers the possibilities and effectiveness of using an additional didactic tool for developing foreign language listening skills – the Learn English Teens electronic resource. In the context of our research, we have considered the definitions of the concept of 'listening' proposed by different researchers and studied the ways to develop listening skills. In the course of studying the issue of developing listening skills, we identified the difficulties in developing this speech skill, identified didactic possibilities for using various electronic resources to develop listening skills, and also considered the structure of tasks for listening presented on the Learn English Teens website. As part of an experiment conducted among 1st year students of Pavlodar Pedagogical University named after Alkey Margulan, the effectiveness of using this electronic resource in the process of developing listening skills was tested.

Key words: foreign language, foreign language communicative competence, speech skill, listening, electronic resource.

ТЫҢДАУ ҚАБІЛЕТТЕРІН LEARN ENGLISH TEENS АРҚЫЛЫ ДАМУ

Андатпа. Қазіргі уақытта шет тілі мұғалімдерінде шет тілін тиімді және қызықты оқытуға арналған құралдардың кең арсеналы бар. Студенттердің шет тілін үйренуге деген қызығушылығын ояту және оқу үдерісін әртараптандыру үшін ұсынылған оқу-әдістемелік кешен шеңберінен шығып, қосымша материалдарды, соның ішінде интернетте орналастырылған электронды ресурстарды пайдалану қажет. Бұл жұмыста шетелдік сөйлеуді тыңдау дағдыларын дамытудың қосымша дидактикалық құралы – Learn English Teens электронды ресурсын пайдаланудың мүмкіндіктері мен тиімділігі қарастырылады. Зерттеуіміз аясында біз әртүрлі зерттеушілер ұсынған «тыңдау» ұғымының анықтамаларын қарастырдық, тыңдау дағдыларын дамыту жолдарын зерттедік. Тыңдау дағдыларын дамыту мәселесін зерттеу барысында біз осы сөйлеу дағдысын дамытудағы қиындықтарды анықтадық, тыңдау дағдыларын дамыту үшін әртүрлі электрондық ресурстарды пайдаланудың дидактикалық мүмкіндіктерін анықтадық, сонымен қатар Learn English Teens бағдарламасында ұсынылған тыңдауға арналған тапсырмалардың құрылымын қарастырдық, веб-сайт. Әлкей Марғұлан атындағы Павлодар педагогикалық университетінің 1 курс студенттері арасында жүргізілген эксперимент аясында тыңдау дағдыларын дамыту үдерісінде осы электронды ресурсты пайдаланудың тиімділігі тексерілді.

Түйін сөздер: шет тілі, шет тілі коммуникативтік құзыреттілік, сөйлеу дағдысы, тыңдау, электронды ресурс.

РАЗВИТИЕ УМЕНИЙ АУДИРОВАНИЯ ЧЕРЕЗ РЕСУРСЫ LEARN ENGLISH TEENS

Аннотация. В настоящее время преподаватели иностранных языков располагают широким арсеналом инструментов для эффективного и интересного обучения иностранному языку. Для того чтобы вызвать у студентов интерес к изучению иностранного языка и разнообразить учебный процесс, необходимо выйти за рамки рекомендуемого учебно-методического комплекса и использовать дополнительные материалы, в том числе электронные ресурсы, размещенные в сети Интернет. В данной работе рассмотрены возможности и эффективность использования дополнительного дидактического инструмента для развития умений восприятия иноязычной речи на слух – электронного ресурса Learn English Teens. В контексте нашего исследования нами были рассмотрены предлагаемые разными исследователями определения понятия «аудирование», изучены способы развития умений аудирования. В ходе изучения вопроса развития умений аудирования нами были выделены трудности развития данного речевого умения, определены дидактические возможности применения различных электронных ресурсов для развития умений аудирования, а также рассмотрена структура заданий для аудирования, представленных на сайте Learn English Teens. В рамках эксперимента, проведенного среди студентов 1 курса Павлодарского педагогического университета имени Алькея Маргулана, была проверена эффективность использования данного электронного ресурса в процессе развития умений аудирования.

Ключевые слова: иностранный язык, иноязычная коммуникативная компетенция, речевое умение, аудирование, электронный ресурс.

Introduction. In the age of active development of the information and digital environment, information is received in large quantities on various topics, ranging from everyday situations and ending with educational, or profile-oriented. However, practice shows that of all the speech skills: speaking, reading, listening and writing, listening is very difficult for students. This is due to the lack of sufficient practice of listening at the lesson and as part of the extra-curricular activities.

The topicality of our research consists in the need to develop listening skills as a component of foreign language communicative competence using electronic resources that fit optimally into both offline and online learning system and take into account the age and preferences of the language learners.

The aim of the research is theoretical substantiation and study of the effectiveness of using the Learn English Teens electronic resource for the development of listening skills of Margulan University students.

Materials and Methods. We have analysed modern research articles and textbooks related to the methodology of English language teaching to define listening and to better understand the processes involved in listening. We have applied the inductive method to make our conclusions, too. We have also conducted an experiment to check the idea that the Learn English Teens electronic resource helps to develop the listening skills of university students. Based on the gathered information and conducted experiment, we have analyzed the effectiveness of using the Learn English Teens electronic resource.

Results and Discussion. When we talk about mastering a foreign language, we mean the development of four types of speech activity: reading, writing, speaking and listening, which are closely related. Since oral communication begins with listening comprehension, this skill is one of the key ones. Many scientists and methodologists notice the key role of listening. For example, researchers J. Morley [1], R.C. Scarcella, and R. L. Oxford [2] recognize it as the most commonly used skill. In turn, D.J. Mendelsohn also notes that speaking comprehension accounts for almost

half of communication (25-30%), 11-16% of it is allocated to reading, and about 9% of it to writing [3]. A similar opinion was expressed by D. Bird, who studied the speech skills used by college students, and came to similar conclusions/ He found out that college students spend almost half (42%) of them devote most of their communication to speaking comprehension, 25% of their time is devoted to speaking, 15% - reading and 18% - writing [4].

However, in English lessons, a lot of time is traditionally devoted to studying grammatical rules and performing grammatical exercises, reading texts and completing assignments to them, learning new words and practicing them [5]. Recently, the situation has begun to change: language learners want to learn how to participate in communication, understand what is being said at conferences and meetings, on TV shows, in lectures in a foreign language, etc. [6, 124].

Let's us examine what "listening" is. The term "listening" was first proposed by the American scientist Brown. M.V. Lyakhovitsky defines listening as a perceptual mental-mnemic activity [7, 23]. M. Underwood defines listening as "the activity of paying attention to and trying to get meaning from something we hear" [8, 1]. FLT researcher M. Rost defines listening as "a process of receiving what the speaker actually says, constructing and representing meaning, negotiating meaning with the speaker and responding, and creating meaning through involvement, imagination and empathy" [9].

In our turn, we agree with the following definition presented by J. M. O'Malley, A. U. Chamot, G. Stewner-Manzanares, L. Kupper, and R. P. Russo: "listening comprehension is an active and conscious process in which the listener constructs meaning by using cues from contextual information and from existing knowledge, while relying on multiple strategic resources to fulfill the task requirement" [10].

For modern schoolchildren who belong to the representatives of Generation Z and Generation Alpha (that is, those who were born in the 2000s and after 2010, respectively), digital technologies are an integral part of their daily life [11, 88]. The current children are generally technology-literate. Smartphones, tablets, laptops, the Internet, video games, modern social networks such as Instagram, Tik-Tok, Likee, are some of the foundations of children's reality.

Since foreign language teaching is aimed at teaching language as a real means of communication, it is impossible to achieve this goal without including in the learning process communicative options that are conditioned by these social and situational factors. The formation of this competence guarantees the further successful socialization of students in a multicultural world [12].

Electronic resources, therefore, can be used in the educational process, and it is important to determine for what purposes they are used. For example, to use them in the classroom, for independent use by children outside of school hours. By integrating electronic resources into the learning process, teacher can solve such **didactic tasks** as: to develop reading skills; to improve the ability to perceive speech by ear based on authentic audio texts; to develop speaking skills through discussion of electronic materials; to expand vocabulary; to familiarize students with cultural knowledge [13, 49].

Among many Internet resources applicable in foreign language teaching (such as online encyclopedias, electronic libraries, virtual tours of famous museums and galleries, online media, online catalogues, online stores, etc. [14, 9]), we should not the major popular British website <https://learnenglishteens.britishcouncil.org/>. The resource under discussion is developed and supported by the British Council, a public charity organization [15]. It "represents the UK abroad in the fields of culture, science, education and training, carrying out activities that are part of the UK's general diplomatic efforts" [16, 156]. These materials are developed by Learning English experts. This resource contains educational materials in text, audio and video format, dedicated to a wide range of topics: culture, lifestyle, travel, history, traditions, etc., and accompanied by tasks for them.

"This resource is aimed at a teenage audience and offers a large amount of interactive language material, including videos of a country-specific nature" [17, 162]. This educational

resource offers tasks in the following sections: Courses, Skills, Grammar, Vocabulary, Exams, UK Now, Study Break, Magazine.

For the development of listening comprehension, the site offers the following levels: Beginner A1, Elementary A2, Intermediate B1, Upper-Intermediate B2, Advanced C1. The suggested topics correspond to the age of secondary schoolchildren and are easily combined with the topics of their major textbook: School, Health, Music, Meals, Meeting People, etc.

The structure of all listening tasks proposed on the site is the same:

Preparation. The section helps to arouse interest in the topic, as well as train students by providing them with the necessary vocabulary.

While Listening. It includes two comprehension tasks: true/false, gap-filling, matching, multiple choice, grouping, changing the word order, question and answer.

Discussion. The task is aimed at discussing what students have listened to. It should be noted that students can check all completed listening tasks on their own by clicking on the Finish button. They can also do the exercise again using the Try Again option. For those students who have difficulty in understanding speech, it is possible to read the Transcript and listen to the text.

Tasks placed in the section on the development of listening skills, allow not only to hear the required information, but also to immerse language learners in a real, live context. Audio texts are read by native speakers, but the pace of speech also changes depending on the level. With the systematic implementation of such classes, students can improve their listening skills, replenish their vocabulary, and acquire and consolidate new knowledge.

What's more, according to I. M. Shabazov and D. D. Maigova, such resources expand the environment of foreign language learning both through vocabulary replenishment and through "opportunities for communicative interaction" [18, p. 88].

Having described the possibilities of using the Learn English Teens resource, we will proceed to the description of our experimental work.

As part of our teaching practice, we have tested the materials of the sections aimed at developing listening skills. Our experimental work was aimed at testing the effectiveness of using Learn English Teens for the formation of speaking comprehension skills among 33 1st year Margulan University students.

Our experimental work consists of three stages. Let's look at each of them.

At the ascertaining stage:

- the experimental and control groups were selected;
- a diagnostic test was conducted (See Appendix 1), aimed at diagnosing listening skills;
- based on the test results, the initial level of listening skills is determined.

The experiment involved 2 groups: a control group of 16 people and an experimental group of 17 people. The control group performed listening tasks provided by the main textbook. The experimental group received additional tasks posted on the Learn English Teens website, with their further discussion.

A diagnostic test was conducted with students of both groups. The time for completing tasks was 20 minutes. The maximum number of points was 14.

The percentages of the diagnostic test results of the participants in the control and experimental groups are shown in Figures 1 and 2.

As the results of the diagnostic test demonstrate, the initial level of proficiency in listening skills in both groups is approximately the same.

At the formative stage, we used the Learn English Teens resource to train the participants of the experimental group. At each lesson, while conducting our pedagogical practice, we additionally used tasks for the development of listening skills, taken from this resource.

The formative stage was aimed at improving the effectiveness of the development of listening skills. In the process of foreign language training of the participants of the experimental group, the materials of the above-mentioned resource were used along with the school curriculum. The participants of the control group studied as usual.

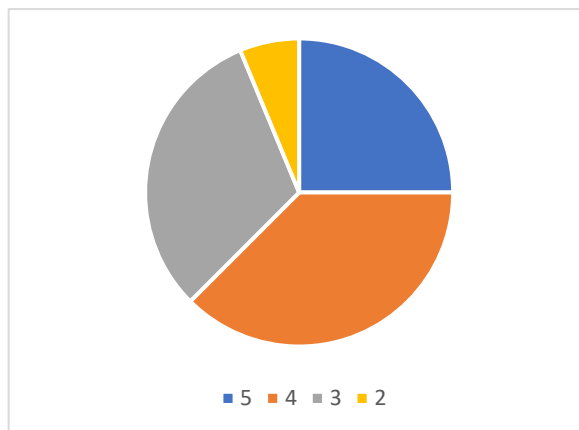


Figure 1 – Results of the Diagnostic Test of the Control Group

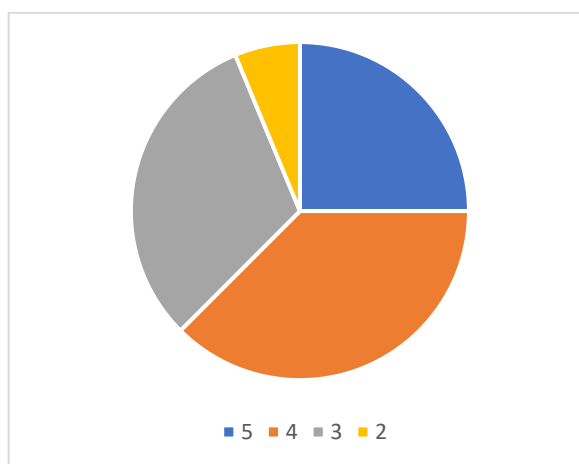


Figure 2 – Results of the Diagnostic Test of the Experimental Group

At the control stage, control testing was conducted both in the experimental and control groups.

Figures 3 and 4 show the percentages of the control test results of the control and experimental groups, respectively.

Comparing the results of the control test of the participants of the control and experimental groups, we found that the gap in the results was 0.6 points: the total score of the participants of the experimental group was 11.5, while the control group was 10.9. This was the basis that allowed us to evaluate the effectiveness of using the Learn English Teens resource in English lessons.

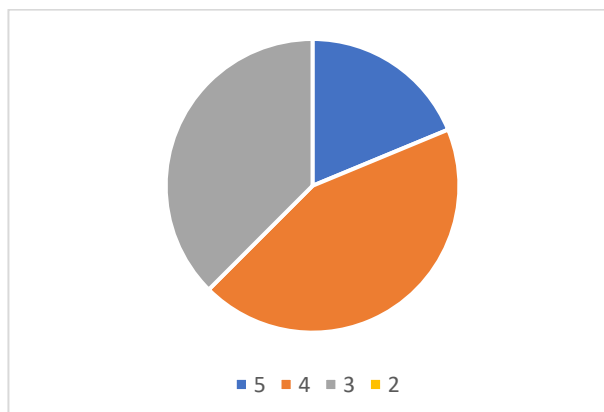


Figure 3 – Results of the Control Test of the Control Group

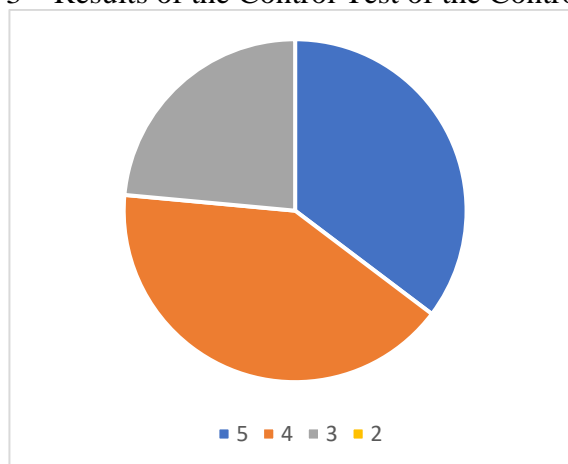


Figure 4 – Results of the Control Test of the Experimental Group

The results and comparative analysis of experimental training allowed us to conclude that the competent inclusion of the Learn English Teens resource in foreign language training (the listening section) leads to an increase in the ability to perceive speech by ear.

Conclusion. In the modern world, English is used as lingua franca, a means of international and intercultural communication. The formation of a foreign language communicative competence, which means the readiness and ability to use the language as a means of international and intercultural communication, is impossible without teaching four types of speech activity: speaking comprehension (or listening), speaking, reading and writing. At the same time, mastering a foreign language directly depends on the effectiveness of the chosen method or teaching tool.

In the present days there is no doubt that the problem of the effectiveness of teaching listening is one of the most relevant in foreign language teaching. Moreover, the desire of students to use gadgets has greatly contributed to the search for interesting electronic resources aimed at developing this skill. We have dedicated our research to trying to solve this problem.

The experiment results have shown that the increase in test scores aimed at checking the level of listening skills in the experimental group was 0.62, while in the control groups it was 0.03.

Consequently, using the Learn English Teens resources in listening comprehension has become a factor that increased the level of listening skills, which is clearly confirmed by the growth dynamics judging by the control test.

After analyzing the empirical data obtained, we have come to the conclusion that the use of the Learn English Teens resource in the classroom and in students' free time allows students to develop their listening skills at a convenient time and in a convenient place for them, as well as other speech skills and language skills, as well as to form social, educational, cognitive, and communicative competencies, as well as to see how language works as a real means of communication.

Summing up, we can state that today the practical application of this resource has a huge potential, since it helps to increase the motivation, activity of students in the classroom and outside it, interest in the English language, and develop skills of independent work. This site is developed by experts and contains educational materials for learning English, including teaching listening. The structure of lessons on teaching listening and the types of listening tasks were studied, the advantages of using this electronic resource were presented.

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