

На рисунке наглядно представлены сравнительные данные среза по уровню обученности курсантов контрольной и экспериментальной групп.

Резюмируя сказанное, можно отметить, что проведенное экспертное оценивание результатов исследовательской работы позволяет сделать выводы о том, что выявленные нами педагогические условия применения интерактивных методов обучения значительно повышают уровень обученности курсантов. В экспериментальной группе проверялась совокупность всех условий. За время эксперимента количество курсантов, находящихся на уровне обученности:

- ниже минимального — сократилось на 3,3 %, что составляет 16,7 % от общего количества курсантов данной группы;
- минимальном — сократилось на 6,7 %, что составляет 23,3 % от общего количества курсантов данной группы;
- среднем — повысилось на 10 %, что составляет 50 %.

Выдвинутая нами гипотеза, что образовательный процесс в военном вузе станет более эффективным средством процесса профессиональной подготовки курсанта, если ведущими станут интерактивные методы обучения, подтверждается.

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THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING FAMILIAR WITH PSYCHOLINGUISTIC PROCESSES OF LISTENING IN L2 TEACHING

Мақалада автор сөз әрекеттерінің ішіндегі маңыздыларының бірі болып саналатын тыңдап-түсіну әрекетінің психолингвистикалық процестерінің шетел тілін үйретудегі маңызын ашып көрсетеді. Тыңдап-түсіну барысында оқушының санасында орын алатын психолингвистикалық процестерді білу шетел тілін үйретуші әрбір оқытушы үшін өте маңызды. Ол процестер түсіну үрдісінен, оқушының санасында бұрыннан бар білімнің қайта жаңғыруынан (schema) және есте сақтау ерекшеліктері мен ес түрлерінен құралады.

Статья посвящена исследованию психолингвистических процессов аудирования в обучении английскому языку как второму. Фундаментальные аспекты аудирования, такие как понимание, активизация тезауруса исследуются автором. Все эти аспекты способствуют фундаментальному пониманию сущности аудирования. Важным является знание психолингвистических процессов, при которых оно осуществляется.

It is known that listening is a very difficult skill to master in foreign language learning. Why can we listen to a spoken language in our native tongue without any difficulties and why is it so difficult and complicated to do the same thing in L2? What is the difference between L1 listening and L2? According to Michael Rost the short answer is that there are many more similarities than differences and those similarities need to be fully appreciated before the differences are considered. The differences are crucial and involve neurological, psycholinguistic, developmental and pragmatic processes [1]. As it is known, listening is an indivisible mental process, we cannot plunge into listener's mind, we can just theoretically explain the processes in which listening occurs. So, this paper will be a kind of theoretical research. We will try to explore such phe-

nomena like comprehension, knowledge activation (schemata) and memory. All of these aspects contribute fundamentally to what listening is.

Psycholinguistic processes in listening.

As Rost (1994) points out, among the four language skills- speaking, listening, reading and writing, listening is the most critical for language learning at the beginning stages. In fact, listening is the most frequently used language skill in everyday life. Researchers (e.g., Rivers 1981; Morley, 1991) propose that we listen twice as much as we speak, four times as much as we read, and five times as much as we write. Listening is a highly integrative skill and research has demonstrated its crucial role in language acquisition (e.g., Rost, 1990; Feyten, 1991; Mendelsohn & Rubin, 1995). Listening is assuming greater and greater importance in foreign language classrooms [2].

Rost (1994) argued that unless listening is given priority at the right level, learning can't begin [3]. Language teachers should do their best to help learners to improve their listening ability. To accomplish this task, it is quite necessary for teachers to know the psycholinguistic processes of listening.

The psycholinguistic processes in listening are: comprehension, knowledge activation (schemas) and memory. In this article the process of comprehension will be explored in terms of «given» and «new» information, also we will try to explain the concept of knowledge activation, the notion of schema and present fundamental concept of memory and memory types used during listening, including phonological loop or echoic memory, short term-memory and long-term memory.

GUO Ling-Hui in her article: «Issues and options in English listening teaching» says that listening involves psychological skills such as recognizing words, parsing speech into constituent parts and processing the discourse in terms of cohesion, logic and relevant underlying schemes, as well as social skills such as giving back-channeling signals and making improvements when misunderstanding occurs [3]. So, the first process to be explored is comprehension.

What is comprehension? At the first view, it is not so difficult to answer this question, comprehension is understanding of something. But it is not so simple when we talk about listening comprehension in foreign language teaching and learning. According to the definition given by Michael Rost, comprehension is the process of relating language to concepts in one's memory and to references in the real world. Comprehension is the sense of understanding what the language used refers to in one's experience or in the outside world. «Complete comprehension» then refers to the listener having a clear concept in memory for every referent used by the speaker [1]. From this definition we can see, that materials for listening should be appropriate to the age, knowledge and level of a listener. Here the idea of Jeremy Harmer can be mentioned: «...If for example, we play a tape of a political speech to complete beginners, they won't understand a word. You could argue that such a tape would at least give them a feel for the sound of the language, but beyond that it is difficult to see what they would get out of it» [4].

Comprehension is often considered to be the first-order goal of listening, the highest priority of the listener, and sometimes the sole purpose of listening. A concrete starting point of discussing how comprehension-the mapping and updating procedure-takes place is the notion of «given» and «new» information. Each intonation unit uttered by a speaker can be seen as including both «new» or «focal» information and «given» or «background» information. The most fundamental aspect of comprehension is the integration of the information conveyed by the text with information and concepts already known by the listener. The process of integration is necessarily sensitive to whether the information conveyed by a sentence provides «given information» (already known to the listener) or «new» information (not already known to the listener). Without this interplay of «new» and «given», there can be no comprehension. The interesting point is that the listener may already «know» everything that the speaker is saying, but there is no comprehension unless the listener integrates information from the speaker's text. The speaker conveys his or her own distinctions between «given» and «new» information through presentation cues. In English, these cues are primarily intonational [1].

If the teacher gives a text for listening without any pre-listening activities and demands of learners to understand every detail and every word of a text, as a result, the learners understand nothing because while they concentrates on understanding every word they miss the whole text. To prove this idea, here again we want to refer to Jeremy Harmer's idea: «Unlike reading, listeners to a tape cannot flick back to a previous paragraph, re-read the headline, stop to look at the picture and think for a bit before continuing. On the contrary, they have to go with the speed of the voice (s) they are listening to. The speed of the speaker (s) dominates the interaction, not that of the listener. It is perhaps this relentlessness of the taped material which accounts for the feeling of panic which many students experience during listening activities. If they fail to recognize a word or phrase they haven't understood –and if, therefore, they stop to think about it-they often miss the next part of the tape and are soon falling behind in terms of *comprehension*. It is especially for this

reason that students have to be encouraged to listen for general understanding first rather than trying to pick out details immediately. They must get into the habit of letting the whole tape «wash over them» on first hearing, thus achieving general *comprehension* before returning to listen for specific detail» [4]. From this passage it can be concluded that at the time of listening it is necessary to let the students try to understand general meaning of a text in the first listening, only then to give them different tasks related to the text. We should not forget that listening and comprehending a foreign speech is not an easy thing for students.

The next supporting evidence is that according to Anderson and Lynch there are two influential views: traditional view and alternative view. Traditional view regarded the listener as a tape-recorder and the listener takes in and stores aural messages in much the same way as a tape-recorder. Anderson and Lynch criticized this view as inappropriate and inadequate. This notion is not a tenable one. Alternative view considered the listener as an active model builder. This kind of listener could combine the new information with his previous knowledge and experience to reach full comprehension of what had been heard. Anderson and Lynch agreed with this view. It emphasized the active interpretation and integration of incoming information with prior knowledge and experience [2]. Many scholars supported this view. We cannot treat a learner as a tape recorder. On more supporting evidence to this view is given by O'Malley and Chamot. They made a conclusion by doing a research on LC in 1989: «Listening comprehension is an active and conscious process in which the listener constructs meaning by using cues from contextual information and existing knowledge, while relying upon multiple strategic resources to fulfill the task requirement» [2].

Researchers like Fischer and Farris (1995) regard listening comprehension as a process by which students actively form a mental representation of an aural text according to prior knowledge of the topic and information found within [2]. And Coacley and Wolvin (1986) suggest that listening comprehension in a L2 is the process of receiving, focusing attention on, and assigning meaning to aural stimuli. It includes a listener, who brings prior knowledge of the topic, linguistic knowledge and cognitive processes to the listening task, the aural text, and the interaction between the two [2]. So, here it can be seen that listening comprehension is not a narrow process. It includes background knowledge of a topic which was listened; only by means of activating this prior knowledge comprehension can be successfully achieved.

In connection with these definitions, the next process in psycholinguistic processes of listening is knowledge activation or activation of the existing knowledge in one's mind. After reading materials about psychological processes, we came to conclusion that, comprehension and knowledge activation are closely connected. Comprehension and knowledge activation are two sides of a coin. Our knowledge is stored in our mind as a schema (plural form is schemata). So, let's explore this phenomenon and its connection to the comprehension.

Let's highlight the following definitions given to the schema or schemata.

XU Fang in her article «Listening comprehension in EFL teaching» writes: «Listening comprehension is regarded theoretically as an active process in which individuals concentrate on selected aspects of aural input, form meaning from passages, and associate what they hear with existing knowledge. Cognitive psychology, the most developed model in accounting for comprehension processes, defines comprehension as information processing. **Schemata are the guiding structures in the comprehension process** [2].

The schema is described by Rumelhart as «a data structure for representing the generic concepts stored in memory. It can be used to represent our knowledge about all concepts: those underlying objects, situations, events, sequences of events, actions and sequences of actions». According to the cognitive comprehension theory, «schema» means an abstract textual structure that the comprehender uses to make sense of the given text. The comprehender makes use of linguistic and situational cues and also the expectations he/she has about the new input to evoke schemata. When a schema has been evoked, it will become a guiding structure in comprehension. If the incoming information is matched with the schema, then the listeners have succeeded in comprehending the text; if they are not compatible, either the information or the schema will be discarded or modified. The principle of schema leads to two fundamental modes of information processing: bottom-up and top-down processing. These two processing intersect to develop an interactive processing. Bottom-up processing is activated by the new incoming data. The features of the data pass into the system through the best fitting, bottom-level schemata. Schemata are hierarchically formed, from the most specific at the bottom to the most general at the top. It acknowledges that listening is a process of decoding the sounds, from the smallest meaningful units (phonemes) to complete texts. Thus, phonemic units are decoded and connected together to construct words, words are connected together to construct phrases, phrases are connected together to construct utterances, and utterances are connected together to construct complete, meaningful text. That is to say, meaning is arrived at as the last step in the process. This process is closely associated with the listener's linguistic knowledge. Top-down processing is explained as employing back-

ground knowledge in comprehending the meaning of a message». In terms of listening, the listener actively constructs (or reconstructs) the original meaning of the speaker employing new input as clues. In this reconstruction process, the listener employs prior knowledge of the context and situation within which the listening occurs to understand what he/she hears. We must realize if the incoming information the listener hears is unfamiliar to him, it cannot evoke his schemata and he can only depend heavily on his linguistic knowledge in LC. Besides, although the listener can trigger a schema, he might not have the suitable schema expected by the speaker [2]. So, here we can see that the schemata of the speaker and listener can be not the same, they can differ.

Here we would like to mention that there are two categories of schemata according to Brown: content schemata and formal schemata. Content schemata include what we know about people, the world, culture, and universe, while formal schemata consist of our knowledge about discourse structure. Also, one of the listening teaching principles given by Brown says: «**Include both bottom-up and top-down listening techniques**». Bottom-up techniques typically focus on sounds, words, intonation, grammatical structures, and other components of spoken language. Top-down processing is evoked from «a bank of prior knowledge and global expectations» and other background information (schemata) that the listener brings to the text [5].

So, we can say that listening is primarily a cognitive activity, involving the activation and modification of concepts in the listener's mind. Michael Rost, for instance, mentions the idea of Kramsch (1997) saying that any adult would have hundreds of thousands of schemas in memory, which would be interrelated in an infinite number of ways. Further, new schemas are created and existing ones are updated constantly: every time we read, listen to, or observe something new we create a new schema by relating one fact to another through logical or semiotic links [1]. For example, if you are listening to a news broadcast on an international conflict, you bring to mind numerous existing schemas about the countries involved, their leaders and past history. Indeed you will need to bring them into your short-term memory in order to comprehend the news story. These schemas built from your understanding of the world, including your experience with comprehending language, will be organized in your mind in ways that make them accessible to you. Schema organization is influenced by a number of factors, such as their frequency (how often you activate particular schemas) and their recency (how recently you have activated similar schemata) [1]. Here, one more an example can be given: if students listen different texts about family, it will not be difficult for them to comprehend general meaning of each text, because they are activating the schemata relating to the family again and again in their memories. We always should take into consideration the fact that learners are at various stages of proficiency, and they differ across a range of characteristics-age, interests, learning styles, aptitude, and motivation and so on. Accordingly, they have different schemata in their minds, we should say. Here one more example can be mentioned given in «Materials and methods in ELT»: In the sentence «*The East German government has resigned. Leaders are meeting to discuss the growing unrest in the country*» the learner heard «**rest**» and did not notice the prefix, despite the clear implication of national instability coming from the passage. Sometimes previous knowledge and/or context may be largely ignored in the interests of a mishearing. Celce-Murcia and Olshtain (2000: 103) give a similar example of a student hearing «communist» when the lecturer had said «commonest». Another student, possibly thinking of a sadly familiar problem in her own country, heard «**plastic bullets**» for «**postal ballots**» in a text that was explicitly about electoral procedure [6].

In the article of LIU Bing, YU Xu-yan, LIN Yu «**Insight of schema theory into interpretation practice**» very interesting information about schema (schemata) was found. The following definition is given there by the authors: «Schema is an important concept in cognitive psychology, referring to how different types of information are connected in our brain, and the process of activating stored information. Here three functions of schemas are given: 1) Schema plays a role in preparation before interpretation, which includes enhancing the interpreter's linguistic competence, and enlarging his storage of background information; 2) Schema influences performance during interpretation in terms of comprehension and note-taking; 3) Summary after interpretation is to supplement original schema. With the guidance of schema theory, interpretation practice can be carried out in an effective way. Schema is a psychological term widely used in interpreting people's understanding of the world. It refers to storage unit of organized knowledge in mind. *All schemas stored in one's mind are one's total knowledge*. For example, a person's schema of «school» might include components such as student, teacher, book, classroom, office, playground, student union, etc. *The more a person knows about school, the larger schema in relevance he has*. Schemas are organizational units, with simpler units «embedded» within more complex units; schemas are processors, affecting our recall of events, and our ability to learn» [7]. Linguistic competence in studying schema is also highlighted in this article. According to HU Zhuang-lin: «Linguistic competence is the ideal language user's knowledge of the rules of his

language. It is a kind of organizational competence, the ability to arrange morphemes, words, and sentences to make sense. The «rules» of a language is a system of sounds, symbols and words in expressing meanings, ideas or thoughts. These rules are stored in people's mind as schemas. Two systems of linguistic rules/schemas must be stored in an interpreter's mind through continuous efforts. The system can be divided into sub-schemas such as phonetic schema, vocabulary schema, and sentence patterns schema, etc. Phonetic schema may include basic phonetic rules and understanding of dialectical differences. Vocabulary schema and sentence patterns schema can be stored in different categories according to specific topics. For example, topics may include culture, education, economy, politics, ceremonial speeches, etc. A solid foundation of linguistic schemas can put interpreters in a positive state of understanding the source language, and generating a purposeful expectation of the coming information» [7].

According to schema theory, a text only provides directions for listeners or readers as to how they should retrieve or construct meaning from their own previously acquired knowledge. Therefore, the interpreter should absorb as much information as possible to build schemas. As Rumelhart states: «When we interpret information, we do so, according to the schema theory, against a background, or map, of experience and we tend to fit incoming information against this background. When the background information concurs the received information, schemas will advance the understanding of the new information. For example, when the interpreter heard the speaker said «Next, I will introduce Shanghai to you...», he could anticipate that the speaker will say something about Shanghai. Immediate activation of the schema of Shanghai is required. The interpreter would associate the geographic position of Shanghai, its economic position and so on [7]. The authors of this article also mention: «Generally speaking, interpreters with different levels of skills may find their inadequacies in different aspects. For the beginners they may find it very difficult to understand non-standard English speakers. Dialects and accents hinder the comprehension of the source language. By studying related researches on different dialects, the interpreter can build up a schema with following information: When French speaks English, the pronunciation of «H» in the word is silent. The German may pronounce «thick» and «three» to «tick» and «tree». Holland can't tell the pronunciation difference from «G» and «H». And Japanese may mistake «R» with «L». Latin Americans tend to pronounce «ing» to «g», while in English it is silent. What's more, people from East Asia may tune as their mother tone when they speak English» [7].

In connection with this Rost says: «Because schemas contain a shorthand code for our experiences, a main function of activating appropriate schemas in comprehension is to allow the listener to induce the presence of people, events and things that **are not explicitly referred to in the text**». And here one more example is given by Rost: «If the speaker is describing an incident at a train station, the listener can presume the presence of people, noise, trains, and ticket vendors, and so on. The speaker need not make explicit whatever he or she can assume the listener already knows through activated schemas. The speaker and the listener do not need to have identical schemas. When there are significant mismatches between the speaker's and the listener's schemas, we say that **misunderstanding** has occurred, when there are critical lapses and the listener is unable to activate any appropriate schema, we say that **non-understanding** has occurred» [1].

Even in the article of Brown «Teaching listening» we can read that the second principle of designing listening techniques is as follows: «Appeal to listener's personal interests and goals. Since background information (**schemata**) is an important factor in listening, take into full account the experiences, goals, and abilities of your students as you design lessons. Also, remember that the cultural background (s) of your students can be both facilitating and interesting in the process of listening» [5]. The hearer recalls background information (schemata) relevant to the particular context and subject matter. A life time experiences and knowledge is used to perform cognitive associations in order to bring a plausible interpretation to the message [5]. We would like to complete this section with the next statement: «Listening comprehension, then, is not only a function of the interplay between language on the one hand and what the brain does with it on the other: it also requires the activation of contextual information and previous knowledge» [6].

So, comprehension and knowledge activation processes are closely connected to each other. The third psycholinguistic process, which is the process of memory, relates to them.

The first supporting evidence, proving that memory and previous knowledge are closely connected is that **existing knowledge is retained in long-term memory as propositions or schemata**. Connection between the new input meaning and existing knowledge take place through spreading activation in which knowledge in LTM (long-term memory) is activated so that it is associated with the new meanings in STM (short-term memory). Comprehension occurs when input and knowledge are matched with each other. Another supporting evidence, from the cognitive perspective (Anderson, 1983, 1985) elaborates that comprehension consists of perception, parsing and utilization. Perceptual processing is encoding of the acoustic or

written message. In listening, this covers chunking phonemes from the continuous speech stream. During this stage, an individual pays close attention to input and the sounds which are stored in echoic memory [2]. From these statements we can conclude that memory; comprehension and activation of previous knowledge are interrelated, closely connected processes which function together in the process of listening.

As Luis Buñuel says: «Our memory is our coherence, our reason, our feeling, even our action. Without it we are nothing»

What do we know about memory and what does it mean? The definition of memory given by Carter is as follows: «In neurological terms, memories are groups of neurons that fire together in the same pattern each time they are activated. The links between individual neurons that bind them into a single «memory» are formed through a process called long-term potentiation (LTP). When we refer to memory in listening, we mean both the process of activating relevant memories to assist in comprehension and the process of forming or updating memories during comprehension» [1].

Memory is generally discussed as involving two dimensions: **long-term memory**, associated with the sum of all of a person's knowledge and experience, and **short-term memory**, associated with knowledge that is activated at a particular moment. Here we want to mention the idea of Postovsky (1974) stating that decoding language input requires recognition knowledge, while encoding language input requires retrieval knowledge retained in LTM. When one understands a sentence, he/she will retain linguistic knowledge in his STM for a short period of time until it is further processed and corresponds to the knowledge retained in his LTM. If he has enough accumulation in recognition knowledge, it will not be easy for him to extract knowledge retained in LTM and make use of it. In the natural listening process, the development of recognition knowledge is prior to the development of retrieval knowledge [2]. Here we see again that while listening we refer to our memory system in order to retrieve our schemata and to comprehend the message.

Over the past century, research on **working memory** has been dominated by the construct of memory as a structural entity. Characterizations of short-term memory have emphasized storage, with the role of STM described as specialized for information maintenance for retrieval after a brief interval, such as when we try to retain a new phone number before we dial it. Cowan (1998) has discussed two phases of short-term memory with very different properties: (1) a brief sensory unresolved afterimage lasting up to two second (sometimes called **echoic memory**) and (2) a more perceptually resolved short-term memory lasting up to 20 seconds. Under this conception, the second phase of short-term memory, lasting 10–20 seconds, is just one of a series of activated features in memory [1]. It is known that the role of memory in listening is very important. The hearer determines whether information should be retained in short-term or long-term memory [5]. When we listen we refer to our long-term memory where our knowledge and experience (schemata) are stored. Then if there is something appropriate with the listened text we transfer that schema to our short-term memory that is activated at a particular moment. It is my own vision of this process. As Brown mentions we cannot peer into a learner's brain, but we can infer that certain things have been comprehended through student's overt (verbal or nonverbal) responses to speech. We know that not all students have a good memorizing ability. Memory should be trained and developed. Connecting these two processes such as language comprehension and memory, Rivers says that recognizing linguistic elements while fundamental to the process, is not enough for understanding what is heard fully. Listeners must be able to hold these elements in STM long enough to interpret the utterance to which they are attending [2]. Xu Fang says: «Improve memory methods. As for the problem of improving English listening, many listeners only see one side of listening more and practicing more, whereas they don't pay enough attention to another side of improving listening methods such as improving the effect of **STM (short-term memory)**. One of the important reasons why many listeners' listening level still remains at the original level is the inappropriate memory method. After listening level is converted from low stage to high stage, the listener should adjust his/her thinking style and memory model in listening properly, be good at finding out various note-taking styles that are helpful to brain memory according to his/her own actual condition and learn how to associate STM with LTM scientifically» [2].

According to Kintsch (1998), the most basic type of learning is «**text base**» **model** of memory use. This type of learning tends to be temporary, fading after even a few hours, because the new learning is not sufficiently integrated with prior knowledge and can only be retrieved in specific ways related to the «learned» text. Learning for a long-term purpose involves a **situational model** of memory that integrates prior knowledge with knowledge gained from the text. This type of learning tends to last beyond a few hours because it is better integrated [1]. So, from investigating this process we have found that memory is closely connected with comprehension and schemata as well, because background knowledge or schemata and memory are inseparable and indivisible processes.

Conclusion

In conclusion, we would like to highlight what we have found while writing this article: 1) For comprehension of a listening material, knowledge activation or activation of schemata are crucial. Teachers should be aware of interests and knowledge and approximate schemata of the students around this or that material or topic to be listened. 2) The psycholinguistic processes in listening are the key factors in teaching listening. All three psychological processes, namely speaking, comprehension, knowledge activation and memory are important and foreign language teachers must be aware of them and know how each of them functions and how they function together. 3) Although schema, memory, and comprehension are not new concepts, they are still remaining rather unexplored and an open area for further investigation.

Even though a person may have good listening ability, he or she may not always be able to understand what is being said. Study by Bone (1988) of native speakers showed the following fact: «People often listen at only 25 percent of their potential and ignore, forget, distort, or misunderstand the other 75 percent. Concentration rises above 25 percent if they think that what they are hearing is important and/or they are interested in it, but it never reaches 100 percent. Do we therefore expect too much of language learners, especially when there is no guarantee that the students are interested or motivated, since they have usually played no part in deciding what they listen to, or why they are listening?» [8]. To our mind, listening is still an open question in the methodology of teaching of foreign languages. Learning to listen effectively is a complex, challenging, and lifelong undertaking, dynamic process that requires skillful integration of appropriate listening attitudes, knowledge, and behaviors.

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