

Formation of listening skills of technical university students by means of pre-listening activities

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Justification. Nowadays it is important to develop listening skills when teaching foreign languages, especially in the context of dealing with technical texts, their comprehension and professional communication. To form such skills, it is necessary to prepare students for listening through pre-listening activities. On the other hand, there are only a few studies considering the role of pre-listening activities in teaching English for Specific Purposes (ESP).

Aim. The development of the pre-listening activities system, which will allow us to form the basis of the university textbook for construction students.

Methods. To define and classify the types of pre-listening activities, we have studied ESP textbooks and conducted an experiment aimed at finding the most effective exercises.

Results. Pre-listening activities in ESP textbooks can be divided into two types: vocabulary preteaching and content previewing. After completing the tasks, students listen to the audio and check their answers.

Vocabulary preteaching includes exercises that prepare students to learn new vocabulary before listening, to use it while doing the exercise and to recognize it while listening. This type may be divided into three subtypes:

1. New vocabulary has to be combined with definitions, terms, photographs, drawings, locations, etc.
2. New vocabulary has to be inserted into the text, graph or table.
3. New vocabulary has to be discussed by explaining the meaning of the words, choosing synonyms, giving examples of usage, etc.

Content previewing prepares students by getting acquainted with the context and the topic of listening. This type may be divided into two subtypes:

1. The content is anticipated by students, i.e. assumptions are made about what the listening may contain.
2. The expected content of the listening has to be discussed in groups or pairs.

To perform the experiment, we have created four different types of pre-listening exercises for one of the units of the university textbook, the text for listening and the final test. We have chosen 117 respondents from Samara Polytech with the same level of language proficiency and divided them into groups: “Content + Lexis”, “Text”, “Lexis”, “Content” and a control group. The first group was prepared by practicing vocabulary and discussing the possible content before listening. In group “Text” we listened to the text on the same topic and discussed it, performed a test and then the students received a similar text for listening. In group “Lexis” students studied the vocabulary, and in group “Content” we discussed the expected content before listening. The participants in the control group had no prior training.

Findings. Pre-listening activities form listening skills and contribute to technical texts comprehension by getting acquainted with new vocabulary and possible content. The experiment has shown the best results among the groups “Content + Lexis” and “Lexis”. We can conclude that providing and practicing sufficient lexical material is essential for technical students, as they may not be able to discuss the content of listening without it.

Keywords: pre-listening activities; listening skills; technical students; English for Specific Purposes; listening exercises.

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