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TEACHING LISTENING COMPREHENSION IN UKRAINIAN L2 CLASSROOM: CLT PERSPECTIVE

The University of Alberta (U of A) is one of Canada's leading research and teaching institutions which houses 18 faculties. Its programs rank among the finest in the country. The University offers 200 undergraduate and 170 graduate programs, including many unique ones that cannot be found at any other Canadian universities. Therefore, U of A is the aim of many applicants, both Canadian and international. Currently, more than 4,000 international students are here in Edmonton to study at the U of A, with about 1,200 international graduate students. (Why University of Alberta, n.d.).

The U of A strives to provide the best funding to international students so they are able to focus on building their intellectual capital rather than worrying about financial issues. There are many research-related awards, scholarships and bursaries available to international graduate students at the U of A. However, most student support is handled through departments, by involving them into research and teaching assistantship. Departments provide graduate students with practical teaching and research experience in the classroom or lab while offsetting the costs of education. (Graduate Teaching or Research Assistantships, n.d.).

The department of Modern Languages and Cultural Studies offers graduate students the opportunity to hone their teaching skills in a number of language courses, among which is a Ukrainian three-level course – UKR 111-112, UKR 211-212, UKR 311-312. Normally, native-speaking graduate students are involved in either assisting or teaching UKR 111-112, UKR 211-212 courses. The prevailing majority of UKR 111-112, UKR 211-212 courses teaching assistants (TA) are graduate students who received their undergraduate or/ and graduate education in Ukraine. Starting their language teaching careers at U of A, they, as personal experience show, face a number of challenges. First, the theoretical and practical approaches to second/ foreign language teaching in Ukraine and Canada are different. Consequently, at the beginning of their careers at U of A TAs from Ukraine may experience difficulties in teaching in line with

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standards which are traditional in North American education system. Second, the examination of the course-books for UKR 111-112 (Pylypiuk, 1996), UKR 211-212 levels (Humesky, 1999) has revealed that the material does not correspond to the principles of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach strictly adhered to in the majority of North American educational institutions. Moreover, such an important communicative activity as listening is completely overlooked in UKR 211-212 level course book (Humesky, 1999). However teaching listening is very important for language learning, since it has been estimated that adults spend almost half their communication time listening (Gilman & Moody, 1984) and there is no way one can learn how to speak in a target language without developing listening skills, since in real life listening precedes speaking. Given the importance of listening in everyday life, it is essential for language instructors to help their learners become efficient listeners. Within CLT approach it can be achieved through listeners' exposure to authentic material and modeling listening strategies. Hence, UKR 211-212 level TAs face a double challenge – absence of knowledge how to teach in line with North American educational standards, on the one hand, and necessity to design materials to develop listening skills, on the other hand.

Therefore, the purpose of the given paper is to present the overview of the key principles of CLT (an approach, dominating the language classroom in North America) as well as to demonstrate how this approach can work in practice in relation to teaching listening in UKR 211-212 course.

Emergence of Communicative Language Teaching

The 20th century can be noted for a great number of different methods and approaches to L2 teaching and learning from Grammar Translation and Audio-Lingual to CLT approaches. While some of them appeared and then sooner or later faded away, CLT has dominated in L2 classroom for decades. CLT appeared in the 1970s as a challenger against Grammar Translation and Audio-Lingual approaches and since then has become popular all over the world. It emerged as a result of viewing the language as a system for communication (Halliday, 1973; Hymes, 1972).

Fundamentals of CLT constructs

The main focus of CLT is on the language function and communicative competence. The functional approach to language learning was first proposed by Halliday (1973) who accentuated the importance of teaching not only forms or structures of a language but the functions they perform in different situational contexts as well. The interpretation of a

function that this or that grammatical structure or form performs is possible only if the situation they are used in is considered as well as the speakers, their social roles and their interpersonal relations (Halliday, 1970). The focus on function rather than on form was further emphasized by Wilkins (1976) who, instead of concentrating solely on grammar, accentuated looking at the meaning of language notions and the function they expressed.

As it was mentioned above, within the framework of CLT hand-in-hand with the functional approach to language teaching/ learning goes «communicative competence», a term introduced by American sociolinguist Hymes to define an ability to use the language in a social context (Hymes, 1972). This concept appeared as an attempt of Hymes to criticize Chomsky's notion of linguistic competence (1965). Hymes argued against the absence of social context in the concept of linguistic competence and its exceptional concentration on grammar knowledge (Hymes, 1972). He posited that a communicatively competent speaker is defined by an ability to use the language both grammatically correctly and situationally appropriately (Hymes, 1972). Therefore, the core constructs of CLT approach are the language function and communicative competence.

Development of CLT frameworks

The concept of communicative competence has been exceptionally important for second language acquisition (SLA) as CLT is a leading approach it employs in and out the language classroom. Therefore, attempts have been made to describe this concept by identifying its components. There have been offered several frameworks, the most significant and representative of which, to my mind, are the models offered by Canale and Swain (1980), Littlewood (1981), Bachman (1990) and Savignon (1997, 2002).

The framework offered by Canale and Swain (1980), and later modified by Canale (1983), is considered to be the most influential for SLA (Savignon, 2002). It distinguished between grammatical, sociolinguistic and strategic competencies (Canale & Swain, 1980). Later discourse competence was added (Canale, 1983). Grammatical competence involves knowledge about lexis, morphology, syntax, phonology and semantics. It is first of all related to the language accuracy. Sociolinguistic competence embraces social norms of language use and norms of discourse. Social norms of language use stipulate whether constructed utterances correspond to the social context and social roles of speakers.

Correspondence of constructed utterances to norms of discourse is determined by the cohesion of combination of these utterances as well as coherence of their communicative functions. Strategic competence entails speakers' ability to overcome communication breakdowns using their linguistic resources. And finally, discourse competence, which was added later to the model, enables speakers to combine linguistic forms in order to perceive and produce oral and written output. Though both sociolinguistic and discourse competencies in the given model have to do with discourse, the authors of the model clearly distinguish between the two competencies, stating that the former one deals with discourse from the point of view of social norms, while the latter considers discourse cohesion and coherence.

This model has been particularly influential on studies concerned with second language use (Jorda, 2005) although there are certain drawbacks about it as well. In particular, Jorda (2005) points out that the given model does not provide connections between its components. She also assumes that a more detailed description of its constituents would benefit to the development of the notion of communicative competence.

Littlewood (1981) presents a framework which distinguishes between pre-communicative, quasi-communicative and communicative activities. The first type of activities is structure-centered and aim learners at acquiring language forms to use further while performing communicative activities. Quasi-communicative activities help learners to choose between the acquired forms in accordance with the required functions. In communicative activities learners put into practice the skills they have acquired during pre-communicative and quasi-communicative activities. Communicative activities are of two types: functional communicative activities and social interaction activities. The former activities aim learners at performing a task making use of the available language resources. The latter activities train learners how to produce socially appropriate output in accordance with the given context. Though, unlike Canale and Swain's (1980) framework, this model provides a clearer description of how its components are interrelated, its activities primarily focus on the form while pre-communicative and quasi-communicative activities are not concerned with meaning at all.

Bachman (1990) suggested a more detailed CLT framework which includes organizational and pragmatic competencies. The first competence deals with abilities which are responsible for identification and understanding meaning of grammatically correct and incorrect sentences,

their arrangement into the text with the aim of its production. Therefore, these abilities are considered from the point of view of grammatical and textual competence. The former consists of knowledge of vocabulary, morphology, syntax and phonology and graphology. Then they are displayed by the way the speaker chooses words and forms and organizes them into utterances in order to show their intentions. Textual competence embraces knowledge of norms in accordance to which the speaker joins the sentences to form a cohesive and coherent text. Therefore it is responsible for rhetorical organization of the text. Hence, organizational competence addresses interpretation and production of utterances, sentences and texts. Pragmatic competence deals with the relationship between the language and the language user and is further subdivided into illocutionary and sociolinguistic competencies. Illocutionary competence addresses the relationships between the utterances and intentions of the speaker and thus correlates with Halliday's (1973) language functions. Sociolinguistic competence involves sociolinguistic conventions which are responsible for appropriate language use. Thus, certain similarities can be traced between sociolinguistic competencies of Bachman's (1990) and aforementioned Canale and Swaine's (1980) models. Bachman's (1990) framework has been rather influential on studies dealing with teaching and learning pragmatics as it addresses pragmatic competence as one of the main components of communicative competence (Jorda, 2005). Hence, the main idea of the given framework is that communicative competence cannot be achieved by focusing solely on grammatical aspect of the language but should envisage other competencies. However, like Canale and Swaine's (1980) model, this framework does not seem to specify the existing relationships between its constituents (Jorda, 2005).

The framework, offered by Savignon (1997) and later called «inverted pyramid» model (Savignon, 2002), addresses four interrelated competencies: grammatical, discourse, sociocultural and strategic competencies. The first one provides learners with sentence-level grammar and enables them to apply their knowledge in meaning negotiation, meanwhile no rules are explained and no grammar errors are corrected. The second competence enables learners to connect utterances into meaningful and coherent text. Sociocultural competence provides learners with knowledge and skills how to use the language appropriately to the given social context. And the author argues that sociocultural variations of a language stimulate learners to willingly engage into

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negotiation of meaning. Strategic competence enables learners to continue negotiating of meaning even if their language recourses are limited. Unlike Canale and Swaine's (1980) and Bachman's (1990) models, this framework provides explicit connections between its components. However, it can be a subject to criticism. It, in contrast to Littlewood's (1981) model, centers on fluency and pays no attention to accuracy. In my view, the model would benefit more if it focused on formal aspect of the language as well.

Practical application of CLT frameworks

The aforementioned frameworks have their differences and similarities as well as pros and cons. While choice for researches which framework to employ is largely dependent on its appropriateness for the framework of this or that study, practitioners formulate their principles by adopting the most characteristic features of the models rather than a particular model itself (Brandl, 2008; Harmer, 2007; Larsen-Freeman, 2000; Richards, 1989). I have tried to identify some of the most common characteristics of CLT that most practitioners agree on.

Integrated skills. The goal of learning in CLT is to communicate. Therefore, the focus of learning should be on the development of communicative abilities. However abilities cannot be differentiated between listening, speaking, reading and writing as it was done in four-skill approach. Therefore, teaching a language within CLT approach should encompass all skills in an integrated way (Brandl, 2008).

Form and meaning. CLT approach envisages that learners should have a purpose of communication. They should focus on the meaning of the output rather than on the language form (structure) of this output. To approach a communicative situation they should be able to produce a variety of structures rather than one particular structure. And the tasks offered by the teacher should not dictate students what language structure they should use. However, CLT does not exclude focus on language structure. It is a necessary component in language learning as focus on structure/ form provides background for further focus on meaning. But it should be taken into account that focus on form should not replace communication (Harmer, 2007).

Fluency and accuracy. In CLT classes learners are viewed as active participants of the communication and are engaged in the negotiation of meaning, focusing either on meaning or on the form, depending on the decision of the teacher, which, in its turn, depends on learners needs (Larsen-Freeman, 2000). When the focus is on fluency rather than on

accuracy, learner's errors are not corrected as long as it does not cause communication breakdown (Harmer, 2007). As far as evaluation is concerned, it focuses on both accuracy and fluency (Larsen-Freeman, 2000).

Real life contexts. Activities in CLT involve students in real or realistic communication (Harmer, 2007). Thus, the materials and tasks selected by the teacher should reflect authentic communication and acquaint learners with the use of appropriate language so that learners can produce not only grammatically correct but contextually appropriate output (Richards, 1986).

Role of learners. Learners are expected to participate actively in the learning process and are engaged into such activities as group work, role-play, simulation, which are, however, not mandatory in CLT classroom (Harmer, 2007).

Role of the teacher. Instead of dominating the class, the teacher analyzes and defines the communication needs of learners, chooses the best forms of communication to engage learners in during a class, organizes and facilitates communication (Richards, 1986) through the target language. In other words, teacher's role is more of a facilitator not transmitter of knowledge. Thus, teaching in CLT classroom is student- rather than teacher-centered (Larsen-Freeman, 2000) and the language of instruction from the very beginning of learning should be target language.

In conclusion, CLT is learner-centered and learner-controlled teaching where teachers act as facilitators. With communication in the target language being the object of this teaching, it addresses the authentic language use, focuses on both fluency and accuracy and integrates all language skills.

Teaching listening

Listening is the communication activity in which people get involved most often. Researches show that adults spend 40-50 % of communication time listening (Gilman & Moody, 1984), and learners may receive up to 90 % of their school information while listening to instructors and to one another (Schwartz, 1998). However, the importance of listening in language learning has only been recognized relatively recently (O'Malley, Chamot, & Kuper, 1989; Oxford, 1993). Beginning in the early 70's, work by Postovsky (1974) brought attention to the role of listening as a tool for understanding and a key factor in facilitating language learning. The principle assumption of the theory is that listening skills can be acquired through extensive exposure to authentic texts (Postovsky, 1974). Later,

Krashen's (1982) ideas about comprehensible input, that provides a modest challenge for the listener, gained prominence. Further, it was reinforced by Asher's (1988) Total Physical Response method, resting on assumption that second language learning is the most effective when at the beginning learners are not forced to produce output. Recent researches have shown critical effect of language input on language learning (Dunkel, 1991; Feyten, 1991), providing support for priority of listening in language instruction. This enabled Dunkel to claim that the study of listening comprehension has become primary in SLA (Dunkel, 1991) and its effectiveness largely depend on efficiency of teaching strategies (Feyten, 1991, Nunan, 2002).

Nature of listening

In order to develop effective approaches to teaching listening, it is necessary to understand the nature of this type of communication. There are two distinct models involved in listening comprehension: the bottom-up processing view and top-down interpretation view. Listeners use 'bottom-up' processing model when they use linguistic knowledge to understand the meaning of a message. They construct meaning of the input from decoding and linking phonemes into words, words into phrases, phrases into sentences, sentences into utterances and utterances into complete meaningful texts grammatical relationships to lexical meanings in order to arrive at the final message. In other words, this process a linear one, in which meaning is constructed at the very end (Nunan, 2002; Vandergrift, n.d.).

The alternative, top-down model suggests that listeners use prior knowledge to understand the message of an input. The original meaning of the input is derived when the listener uses the in-coming words as clues and prior knowledge to make sense of what one can hear. Prior knowledge can be the knowledge of the situation, the listening context, the text-type, the culture or other information stored in long-term memory as schemata (typical sequences or common situations around which world knowledge is organized) (Nunan, 2002; Vandergrift, n.d.).

To summarize, it should be mentioned that listening comprehension is not a mere bottom-up or top-down processing, but a complex interactive, interpretive process where the listener uses both knowledge of prior situation and context as well as language knowledge to understand the meaning of input. The degree to which listeners use the one process or the other depends on their knowledge of the language, familiarity with the topic or the purpose for listening. For example,

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listening for gist involves primarily top-down processing, whereas listening for specific information, involves primarily bottom-up processing to comprehend all the desired details (Vandergrift, n.d.). Nowadays it is recognized that both strategies are needed in teaching listening comprehension (Nunan, 2002).

Listening in practice

Listening is an essential means of communicative skills development, a point that has been overlooked in language pedagogy. For example, within Grammar-Translation method listening in language classes was performed only as a means to present new grammar. Though much attention was attached to listening in Audio-Lingual method, learners only listened to drill pronunciation necessary for speaking. It sounds anecdotal that they tried to teach listening without paying any attention to developing listening skills. And listening skills are an important part of communication skills. Without being a good listener, one cannot make a good speaker. It is natural. A baby starts speaking after listening to the words parents and other people say to it. Not vise versa.

In the late 60s with the advent of CLT approach practitioners started to realize the importance of listening and allocated time to practice the skill. And as Field (2002) stipulates the format for teaching listening was standard at that time and consisted of the following stages:

- Pre-listening
  Pre-teaching of all important new vocabulary in the extract
- Listening
  Extensive listening (followed by general questions about the context)
  Intensive listening (followed by detailed comprehension questions)
- Post-listening
  Structural analysis of the language in the text
  Pronunciation drills.

Over the last several decades this format has been considerably modified by practitioners. Hence, our purpose is to investigate what kind of changes has taken place and what changes have not gone far.

Pre-listening stage. Pre-teaching of vocabulary is very rarely performed nowadays. It makes sense since in real life learners cannot expect that somebody will explain unknown words to them. And in the class room they have to learn how to ignore or guess the meaning of unfamiliar words in order to perform communication tasks. However, I

would agree with Field (2002) that sometimes it is necessary to present several words before the listening activity. But these words should be key words – the words «without which any understanding of the text would be impossible» (Field, 2002, p. 243).

There are some kinds of pre-listening activities which nowadays are considered to be usual – predicting activities. Their appropriateness for teaching listening rests on the research results from cognitive psychology which have shown that aural comprehension is more than extracting meaning from input. It is a process of matching input with listeners' prior knowledge about the topic. Hence, when learners are familiar with the context of an input, the process is very much facilitated, since listeners can activate prior knowledge and make the appropriate inferences in order to understand what they hear (Byrnes, 1984). By activating appropriate prior knowledge for understanding, teachers help students organize their thoughts to make predictions and get ready for listening. This significantly reduces the burden of comprehension for the listener (Vandergrift, n.d.).

If teachers suspect that there are gaps in their learners' knowledge concerning the topic of input, listening itself can be preceded by schema-building activities to prepare learners for the listening activity to follow (Nunan, 2002). For example:

Вправа 1. Погляньте на фото. Чим люди займаються на кожній з них? Звідки ці люди? Чому вони цим займаються? (Exercise 1. Look at the photos. What are the people in each of the photos doing? Where do you think these people are from? Why do you think they are doing this?)

The aim of the pre-listening schema-building Ex.1 is to draw students' attention to the pictures and introduce them into the topic of the forthcoming texts. It is a prediction exercise which helps the students to predict not only the content but the vocabulary from the texts from the next exercise. In this case we try to connect the next task with the cultural and language experience of the students.

This phase of the sequence usually takes much time. Therefore, teachers should bear in mind that long pre-listening activities shorten the time of listening itself. Though they can also be counter-productive as they can result in much of the language content of the input being anticipated. Revising vocabulary in advance enables learners to focus on it while listening – sometimes, unfortunately, «at the expense of global meaning» (Field, 2002, p. 243).

Listening stage. Most practitioners have distinctions between extensive and intensive listening. Though, some theorists criticize it,

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stating that it is not natural since in actual life situations listening is a one-way process. But one may argue that the whole situation of listening to a record is also unnatural. Moreover, listening to a new voice pattern in a foreign language requires a process of adjusting to the pitch, speech melody, tempo of the voice. In relation to this we agree with Field that «an initial period of extensive listening allows this» (Field, 2002, p. 243).

Listeners do not pay attention to everything they hear -- they listen selectively, according to the purpose of the task. The task, in turn, determines the type of listening and the way in which listeners will deal with the task (Vandergrift, n.d.).

There are a lot of different types of listening which can be classified according to different principles, including purpose for listening, the role of the listener, type of the text for listening. In practice these types are mixed in different configurations and each require a particular strategy to be used to approach it (Nunan, 2002).

Listening purpose is an important principle. Listening to input for its general understanding involves different processes and strategies from listening to the same input but for specific information. Listening to instructions, say, how to get to a place on the map requires different listening strategies from listening to a narration (Nunan, 2002).

By designing appropriate listening tasks, we can teach listeners how to adopt a flexible range of listening strategies. This can be done by letting learners listen to the same text several times, however, providing listeners with different instructions before each listening (Nunan, 2002). For example:

Вправа 2. Прослухайте три радіорозповіді про національні пристрасті і співвіднесіть їх з малюнками у Вправі 1. (Exercise 2. Listen to three radioprograms on well-known national passions and match them with the pictures in Ex. 1).

The aim of comprehension Ex. 2 is to check students' general understanding of the texts, ignoring unknown words.

Вправа 3. Прослухайте тексти ще раз і дайте відповідь на питання. (Exercise 3. Listen to the texts again and answer the questions):

1) Кого можна побачити сонячним днем на узбережжі Австралії? (Who can you see on a sunny day on the sea-shore of Australia?)

2) Чому бразильці відвідують школи самба? (Why do Brazilians go to samba schools?)

3) Де можна побачити гравців у футбол в Україні? (Where can you see football-players in Ukraine?).

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The aim of comprehension Ex. 3 is to check students' understanding of the texts in details.

Therefore, by providing listeners with different instructions before each listening we can train them to note differences of the emphasis (Nunan, 2002).

However, practitioners posit that there have been changes in the sequence of comprehension check. Nowadays, comprehension questions are presented before listening, since, as Field argues, being unsure of what they will be asked, listeners cannot understand the level of detail that will be asked about. And by presenting comprehension questions, we can ensure that they will listen with a clear purpose and the influence of memory on the correctness of their answers will be excluded (Field, 2002).

Nowadays practitioners (Field, 2002) seek new ways of improvement of teaching listening. The current practice of providing listeners with comprehension tasks rather than questions is gaining its popularity. The new technique involves listeners into doing something with extracted information. They can be offered to label (e.g. Listen to the weather forecasts and match them with the clothes you will wear in such weather), select (e.g. Listen to the weather forecast for today and select the clothes from the offered which you will wear), drawing (e.g. This night one of the houses was burgled. You are a police officer. Ask the witness of the crime questions about the appearance of the suspect. Draw a picture of him. Then show the picture to the witness), form-filling (e.g. You are a hotel receptionist. Ask the guest questions in order to fill in the registration form). This type of activities models the situations of real communication as well as provides a more reliable way of checking understanding. A major difficulty with comprehension questions is that it is difficult to understand whether learners gave a wrong answer due to their misunderstanding of a question or failure in listening. The advantage of listening tasks is that they minimize both reading and writing and focus on listening (Field, 2002).

Another development in teaching listening within CLT approach is the increase of usage of authentic material. Authentic input provides listening experience much closer to real-life situations. For this reason it is recommended that learners should be exposed to authentic input at very early stages of language learning. Normally, students are not discouraged by the difficulty of the authentic input if they are told in advance that it is ok if they do not understand everything. On the contrary, they may feel motivated by discovering that they «can extract information from an

ungraded text» (Field, 2002, p. 244). The core of this approach is that instead of simplifying input instructors should simplify the task.

Post-listening stage. Nowadays the practice of examining the grammar of the input is no longer addressed in the language classroom. However, it remains appropriate to pick up any functional language and draw learner's attention to it (Field, 2002). F.g. Listen to Natalia talking about her sister and write down the adjective to describe her build, height, eyes, hair.

The listen and repeat activities have been dropped as well, positing that it is not effective and does not correspond to CLT. Though, Field (2002) argues for it, saying that it develops listeners' ability of segmentation of speech flow, which is an important skill for the development of listening comprehension.

Another post-listening activity is inferring vocabulary meaning from the context. Its procedure is like this: the instructor writes the target vocabulary on the board, replays the sentences with them and asks learners to decipher their meaning. One of the problems that can arise is that it takes time to find the needed sentence on record. Therefore, Field (2002) recommends to record copy the target sentences separately.

As a part of post-listening, the instructor can personalize the content of the sequence so that «learners can bring something of themselves to the task» (Nunan, 2002, 240). There are many ways how to personalize listening. In particular, it is possible to increase the involvement of the learner by providing extension tasks to listening activities but which will engage learners into providing part of the content themselves. F.g. Today in the class you listened to radioprograms about world-famous national passions. What is the national passion of your country? Have you ever attended to it? Would you recommend for or against it? Why? In this way learners, in terms of CLT approach, gain control over the content of the listening sequence.

To summarize, it is necessary to say that a contemporary listening sequence is very much different from the format which was elaborated by practitioners at the very beginning of CLT development. Some aspects of teaching listening are no longer welcome in a language classroom – pre-teaching vocabulary, unless it is vocabulary without which correct understanding is impossible, and mere repeating of language units from the input text have been dropped. Extensive and intensive listening comprehensive check practices have been modified over years – comprehensive questions are being replaced by more reliable comprehensive

tasks which nowadays are presented before listening. Mere analysis of the input grammar has been replaced by examining its functional role in the text. Over the decades practitioners, influenced by CLT theories, have developed practices of teaching listening, which nowadays are considered a must in a language classroom – setting both thematic and language contexts at the pre-listening stage, different task preset before each listening of the same input, increased use of authentic material, inferring vocabulary meaning and personalizing the listening sequence content These gains account for the shift from teacher-centered and teacher-controlled way of teaching listening to more learner-centered, thus enabling students' getting more and more in control of the lesson and changing the role of the teacher from transmitter of knowledge to facilitator.

Listening lesson sequence

As aforementioned, within CLT approach no skill exists in isolation (which is why skills are integrated in many learning sequences). Listening can occur at different stages of a lesson sequence. Sometimes it serves as a prelude for the following activities. Sometimes it can be a starting point for a listening activity with acting-out to follow. In this case students prepare the role-play of what they have heard. Sometimes listening can be an introduction to writing or speaking activity which is planned to be the main focus of a lesson. In other lessons listening is taught as their central focus (Harmer, 2007).

On the whole, I cannot but agree with practitioners that we should involve using listening for «as many purposes as possible – both for practicing a variety of skills and as source material for other activities» (Harmer, 2007, p. 310).

The following examples are offered in order to specify the activities, describe the objectives of the activities and materials to be used, to detail the involved skills. I will also focus on the way the students are going to be organized and the approximate time they will need to perform the activities. I will also try to speculate on advantages and disadvantages of the activities in linguistic, cultural and sociocultural terms. This is the example of listening activities with speaking to follow for UKR 211 course (Ukrainian as a foreign language, second level, first semester), conversational class, topic: «My Family».

Objectives of the sequence:

- Communicative: developing skills in listening for general and specific information, talking about families.
- Linguistic: focusing on vocabulary to describe family relations.

Вправа 1. Погляньте на сімейне фото Олега. Як ви думаєте, ким доводяться Олегу люди, зображені на фотографії? (Exercise 1. Look at the photo of Oleh's family. What do you think the relationships between the people in the photo are?). [1]

The aim of the pre-listening Ex. 1 is to draw students' attention to the family picture and introduce them to the topic of the forthcoming text. Thus, we will help students to use what they already know to understand what they will hear. As the task is not difficult and not time-consuming (2-3 min), students work individually, answering the question. It is a prediction exercise which helps the students predict not only the content but the vocabulary used in the input. Listeners use content words and contextual clues to form hypotheses in an exploratory fashion.

Вправа 2. Прослухайте розповідь Олега про його сім'ю та заповніть пропуски на фото іменами, поданими у рамці. (Ex. 2. Oleh is showing the photo of his family to his colleagues. Colleagues ask him questions. Listen to what Oleh tells his colleagues about his family and fill in the blanks in the photo with the names given in the box).

Марина   Ольга   Софія

_____
[1] My friends have kindly allowed me to use their family photo for educational purposes

The aim of comprehension Ex. 2 is to check students' general understanding of the text, ignoring unknown words and containing the words they studied in previous classes. Thus, we provide the students with the opportunity to review the previously learned vocabulary. Hence, teaching the learners vocabulary is spiral. The students work individually, they listen to Oleh's story and match the visual images of his family members with the suggested names in the box. Doing this exercise takes up to 4 min. We suggest this exercise as individual, because the process of perceiving information via listening in real-life situations is, as a rule, individual .This way we try to put the students into the situation which more or less resembles real-life communication – talking about one's family with friends. Moreover, this text provides sociocultural information – information about a nuclear Ukrainian family.

Вправа 3. Дайте відповідь на запитання. Хто: (Ex. 3. Listen to the text again and answer the questions on the text. Who:)
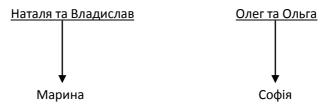
1) готується до танцювального конкурсу? (is getting ready for the dance contest these days?)

2) допомагає по дому Ользі? (helps Olha about the house?)

3) молодший від Олега на 19 років? (is 19 years Oleh's junior?)

4) від кого Олег старший на 1 рік? (is Oleh 1 year older?)

5) має пристрасть до подорожей? (has passion for travels?)

6) мріє стати поетесою? (has a dream to become a poetess?)

7) хоче стати перекладачем? (wants to be a translator?)

8) працює у нічні зміни? (works night shifts?)

9) дивиться канал Discovery на дозвіллі? (watches Discovery channel in free time?)

10) вивчає іноземні мови? (learns foreign languages?)

The aim of comprehension Ex. 3 is to check students' understanding of the texts in details. By getting students to listen to the text again, however, following a different instruction, we teach them to adopt a flexible range of listening strategies. We recommend the «weaker» students answer a question and then it is advisable to involve the «stronger» students in providing some additional information to their peers' answers. The teacher also provides feedback of students' answers, corrects their mistake, focusing students' attention on the rule of using this or that form of the word or grammatical structure, thus both on the meaning and the form. Students work in pairs on the questions in order to reduce cognitive load. The activity takes about 4-5 min.

Вправа 4. Відмітьте галочкою ті слова на позначення родинних стосунків, які були вжиті у розповіді Олега. (Ex. 4. Tick those family relations words which were used in Oleh's story. What do the words mean?). ☐

☐ племінниця ☐ дядько ☐ дочка ☐ чоловік ☐ двоюрідня сестра

☐ тітка ☐ батько ☐ дружина ☐ невістка ☐ племінник

The aim of language-based Ex. 4 is to draw students' attention to the vocabulary in the text and make inferences about their meaning. If necessary, the teacher can provide the context the words were used in. The activity takes about 2 min. It is a short activity and thus does not require to be done in the other way but individually.

Вправа 5. Подивіться на родинне дерево Олега і у парах заповніть попуски відповідними словами з **Вправи 4.** (Look at Oleh's family tree and in pairs fill in the gaps with the appropriate form of the words from **Ex. 4**).

<u>Наталя та Владислав</u>   <u>Олег та Ольга</u>

↓   ↓

Марина   Софія

1) Олег – _____ Ольги. (Oleh is the _____ of Olha)
2) Софія – _____ Олега. (Sophia is the _____ of Oleh)
3) Владислав – _____ Марини.
4) Марина – _____ Владислава.
5) Софія – _____ Марини.
6) Владислав – _____ Софії.
7) Ольга – _____ Марини.
8) Софія – _____ Владислава.

The aim of language-based Ex. 5 is to teach students to use the words from the previous exercise in a new context (in this case sentences)

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different from the context (sentences) of the text for listening. Thus, this exercise draws students' attention to the meaning and form of the words – the same words in a different language context can change its grammatical form. Students work in pairs – a «weaker» and a «stronger» student. We suggest pair-work as to do this exercise students need to trace the relationship of the people within the suggested family, which presupposes discussion. Moreover, the «weaker» students benefit from pair-work as the «stronger» students can explain to them the usage of this or that grammatical form of a particular word (focus both on the form and meaning). The activity takes about 4 min.

Вправа 5. Намалюйте своє сімейне дерево. Розкажіть про свою сім'ю своєму товаришеві. Розкажіть своїм одногрупникам про сім'ю свого друга від третьої особи. (Ex. 5. Draw your family tree. Tell your partner about your family. Report to the class what you have learned about your partner in the third person).

The aim of this communicative activity is to practice students in telling about their families and their friends' families, making the necessary changes in sentence structures. Students work in pairs and then report what they have learned about their friends to the class. Involving students to work in pairs «stronger» – «weaker», the teacher saves time and efforts as stronger students help the weaker. As reporting about what they got to know about their friends is a bit more difficult task, as it requires making some grammatical changes, we suggest checking the stronger students. Then the teacher analyzes the most common mistakes, involving the students into providing the rules (focus both on the form and meaning). The activity takes about 15 min. This is an example of personalizing activity which provides students with an opportunity to bring something of themselves to the task. In this way learners are given some degree of control over the content of the sequence which is one of the most characteristic features of CLT approach.

Conclusion

The given study outlines the theoretical and practical aspects of teaching listening in UKR 211-212 course within CLT approach. An insight into the history of CLT development will provide TAs with an understanding of two core principles of the given approach: language function and communicative competence. In order to describe the communicative competence concept by identifying its components, several frameworks have been considered. As it has been investigated the considered frameworks are not homogeneous and have their pros and

cons. The most characteristic features of the frameworks adopted by practitioners have been considered. I have suggested that in order to teach learners listening, it is needed to develop both bottom-up and top-down listening skills. I have also focused on importance of strategies-based approach to teaching listening. I have also argued that an effective teaching listening within CLT will: aim at communication in the target language; be learner-centered and learner-controlled, with the teacher acting as a facilitator; address authentic language use; focus on both fluency and accuracy; integrate all language skills; set both thematic and language contexts at the pre-listening stage, assigning a different task before each listening to the same input; infer vocabulary meaning and personalize the listening sequence content.

And finally, I assume that an emphasis on theoretical background of teaching listening within CLT approach, development of framework for incorporating considered theoretical claims into UKR 211-212 course as well as development of some concrete activities for developing listening skills will help TAs not simply involve their learners into practice in listening in their classes but produce better and more confident listeners.

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