



METHODOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS OF THE USE OF LISTENING TEXTS IN PRIMARY SCHOOL AZERBAIJAN LANGUAGE CLASSES

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Abstract: The article examines the methodological foundations of using listening texts in Azerbaijani language lessons at primary school level. Listening skills are an important component of students' language and speech development, and purposeful methodological approaches are necessary for the formation of these skills. The study examines the selection criteria for listening texts, the stages of presentation, and the types of tasks used when working with the texts. It is considered important for teachers to take into account the age characteristics and individual abilities of students in the listening process. The results show that the systematic use of listening texts improves students' attention, memory and speaking skills, while also enhancing their independent thinking and comprehension skills. The methodological suggestions presented in the article are of practical importance for primary school teachers and provide a basis for more effective organisation of listening skills in the teaching process.

This article examines the methodological foundations of the use of listening texts in Azerbaijani lessons in primary schools. Listening skills, as the first stage of language activity, play an important role in the development of students' speaking, thinking and communication skills. The study shows that the correct selection and gradual implementation of listening texts strengthens primary school students' attention, memory, comprehension of content and ability to identify the main idea.

Key words: primary school, Azerbaijani language, listening skills, listening texts, methodological foundations, teaching strategy, pedagogical importance, student motivation, speech culture, communicative competence.

Introduction. Economic, social and cultural changes in the world are directly related to education. Education is an indispensable component of culture (Alizadeh, 2001, p. 8). In this regard, in the modern education system, the primary school level is the main stage at which students' language skills are formed and their future development trajectory is determined. At this stage, the goal of teaching the mother tongue is not limited to the acquisition of grammatical knowledge, but requires the parallel development of listening, speaking, reading and writing skills in students. Listening is particularly important among these skills. Since listening skills are the first stage of speaking activity, they directly affect the acquisition of other language skills and form the basis of language learning and speaking activity. Those who want to learn a language first acquire the language by listening, accumulate vocabulary, learn sentence structures, intonation and pronunciation. This stage helps the brain to

build language models. As a result of listening, a person hears and imitates correct speech patterns. Listening also leads to the development of vocabulary and grammatical structure. The listener thus becomes familiar with new words and expressions, memorises them and incorporates them into his active vocabulary. Grammar rules are learnt naturally through practical listening. At the same time, listening lays the foundation for reading and writing skills, builds communication skills and, on the other hand, creates motivation and interest.

The formation of listening skills ensures the concentration of students' attention, the development of logical thinking, the enrichment of vocabulary and the correct construction of speech in terms of content and form. However, practical observations show that the use of listening texts in primary school classrooms is usually formal and not systematic. However, the purposeful application of listening texts has a significant impact on the activation of students' thinking skills, the formation of speaking culture and the development of communication skills.

The Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan ‘On General Education’ (General Education Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan, 2019) and the State Standards of General Education (Mehrabov, 2012) set the formation of communicative competence as one of the main goals in the process of mother tongue teaching. One of the main components of communicative competence is listening. In this context, the development of a methodology for the use of listening texts in Azerbaijani language classes is a topical pedagogical problem.

Methodology. The purpose of this article is to investigate the methodological foundations of the use of listening texts in Azerbaijani lessons in primary school classes, to reveal their pedagogical significance, to analyse the strategy of phased implementation and to offer practical recommendations.

The aim of the study is the listening texts used in Azerbaijani lessons in primary school classes and their impact on students' language skills.

The following methods were used in the study:

–Pedagogical observation - monitoring the implementation of listening texts in lessons.

Using this method, Azerbaijani lessons in various primary school classes were observed and the situation regarding the implementation of listening texts was analysed. The observations showed that the time allocated to listening activities is limited and methods that ensure students' active participation are rarely applied. This result proves the importance of paying more attention to the development of listening skills.

– Experimental method - Testing the phased implementation of listening texts in selected groups of pupils.

The experiment was conducted in 3 different primary school classes. In the first phase the lessons were taught in the traditional way, while in the second phase the listening texts were practised using a three-stage strategy (preparation, listening, post-listening). Comparison of the results showed that the second group of students understood the content of the text 27% better.

–Analysis and comparison - Analysis of methodological tools, textbooks and programme documents.

Existing textbooks and methodological tools on Azerbaijani language were analysed and it was found that although the presentation of listening texts is carried out in a systematic way, there are not enough methodological explanations and examples of practical application. This analysis formed the basis of the methodological justification of the study. At the same time, various methodological approaches were compared and the most suitable model for effective organisation of listening activities in primary school classes was selected.

Main section. Methodological foundations of listening texts in primary school classes play a central role in the development of students' language skills. Listening, as the first stage of speaking activity, is the main means of developing students' vocabulary, the formation of content comprehension and expressive skills. The selection and application of texts in the listening process should be done according to the following methodological principles:

1. Appropriateness to age and developmental level

In order for listening materials to yield effective results, it is essential to select them in accordance with the age and developmental level of the students. The age factor determines the student's interest, attention span, speed of perception and learning style in general. "Each age has its own level, perception and way of thinking" (Badalova, 2015, p.35). For example, in the primary school age group (6-9 years), listening materials with a simple and repetitive structure that reflect daily life, such as fairy tales, riddles and games, are more appropriate. For children of this age, visual support and emotion-laden texts play an effective role in the formation of listening skills. In the middle age group (10-13 years), listening texts with the themes of heroism, friendship, school and family should come to the fore. In this period, adolescents tend to use more complex sentence structures and to separate the main idea from the details.

For older and adult learners (14 years and older), dialogues that reflect real life, social issues, daily problems and content related to personal development increase motivation for listening activities. In addition to the age factor, students' individual developmental levels should also be taken into consideration. The language skills and cognitive development of individuals in the same age group may differ from each other. Therefore, the difficulty level of the text should be chosen according to the level of comprehension, neither too easy nor too complex. Key words, previously known content and context increase students' comprehension. Appropriate volume is also an important factor - short, rhythmic and dynamic texts are more suitable for young children. When all these principles are taken into account, students' interest and motivation to listen increases, the development of language skills takes place naturally and gradually, students' active participation and attention is ensured, the assimilation of new vocabulary and expressions is accelerated, and the skills of comprehension, analysis and conversation building are formed. It is important to select texts taking into account the attention span, vocabulary and logical thinking characteristics of primary school students. Texts that are not suitable for children's age characteristics distract their attention and reduce their interest in the learning process. The length of the texts, language structures and vocabulary selection should be appropriate to the age level of the students. For

example, for 1-2th grade students, texts taken from daily life, consisting of short and simple sentences and texts about familiar objects should be selected.

The principle of age and developmental level appropriateness in the selection of listening materials should be considered as one of the important methodological approaches in modern language teaching. When this suitability is ensured, listening activities become not only a passive perception but also an active learning process. Consideration of these criteria by teachers and trainers forms the basis for more effective development of students' language skills.

2. Engaging and motivating content

“Modern lessons, including Azerbaijani lessons, are subject to a certain system in terms of content and structure; the optimal organisation of this system requires serious pedagogical and psychological preparation from the teacher. This preparation includes, first of all, the planning of the lesson in accordance with the motivation, general training, upbringing and development functions” (Gurbanov, 2008, p.61). In the language learning process, interesting and motivating content has a direct impact on the success of the student. Therefore, materials based on topics that are of interest to learners enable them to participate more actively in the lessons. Interest creates conditions for the learner to concentrate and better assimilate information. Engaging and motivating content strengthens intrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation to learn increases when learners make an emotional connection with the content. For example, animals, plants, family life, school life or simple entertaining stories engage children and encourage them to listen actively. Motivational texts increase children's interest in reading, talking and asking questions, making the learning process more interactive. Here are some reasons why it is important that the content is engaging and motivating:

- Creates active participation and continuity in learning;

Activities based on interesting and vital topics (games, discussions, role plays) transform the learner from a passive listener into an active participant. This leads to continuous and sustainable learning.

- Increases memory capacity;

Emotionally impressive or engaging content is remembered longer in the brain. For example, words and phrases presented through an engaging story or video are more easily remembered.

- Connects with real life;

Vital and practical topics enable the learnt knowledge to be associated with daily life. This helps students to find the answer to the question “why do I need this information?” and creates a real motivation to learn.

So what should a teacher do to make content engaging and motivating? - We believe that by involving learners in topic selection, asking about their interests and selecting appropriate content, using modern and interactive materials (videos, music tracks, real-life dialogues), organising game and task-based activities (listening-based competitions, group games, “fill-in-the-blank” listening tasks), personalising content, providing listening texts and tasks suitable for different learning levels, and developing listening skills by using the possibilities of technology (mobile

applications, interactive platforms and social media content), the teacher will achieve the desired results in the implementation of this study.

3. Systematic presentation of language and grammatical structures

Listening skills are one of the key components of language learning, as well as an important means for listeners to naturally master the grammatical and lexical structures of the language. However, the effectiveness of this process depends on the systematic and purposeful presentation of language and grammar structures used in listening texts. While randomly selected, aimless and unsystematic texts slow down the learning process, structured presentation prepares the ground for the gradual and consistent development of language skills.

The systematic presentation of language and grammar structures in listening texts provides a synthesis of theoretical knowledge and practical skills in the language learning process. The presentation of grammar in a natural context, in a coherent and purposeful way, enables learners to use this knowledge actively. Modern teaching approaches show that listening is not only a comprehension skill, but also a means of active learning and language construction.

In order for learners to master new vocabulary and expressions, listening texts should be presented in stages. In the first stage, students are taught key words and expressions, then the text is read and the main content is discussed. After reading the text, students are expected to make short sentences and express the main idea of the text. This approach develops language skills systematically.

4. Suitability for individual and group work

In the design of listening texts, it is important that they are suitable for both individual and group work. For primary school students, this suitability helps them to concentrate and develop their social communication skills. Individual listening exercises enable children to pay more attention to the text they are listening to, to identify main and supporting ideas, and to understand and analyse what they hear individually. In this process, students work on the text at their own pace, learn to select and remember information by concentrating their attention. On the other hand, listening activities organised in groups create an environment of joint learning and cooperation for children. Activities such as discussing the content they have listened to together, identifying the main idea, thinking about the main characters and repeating the sequence of events develop their communication and listening culture as well as their speaking skills. During group work, children learn to respect each other's opinions, to share what they hear and to make decisions together, which creates the necessary conditions for socialisation and the development of communication skills.

Therefore, the application of listening texts in both individual and group formats in primary school develops students' language comprehension, thought expression and social behaviour skills in a multidimensional way.

5. The Principle of repetition and reinforcement

Listening texts are one of the basic tools in the formation of language skills in primary school students. The principle of repetition and reinforcement plays an important role in the learning process for the development of these skills. It is not correct to listen to the text only once. Considering the age level and comprehension

skills of children, the listening material should be presented several times and the content should be reinforced with various activities after each listening. “The strength of knowledge acquisition is determined by the organisation of education, the use of various forms and methods and the duration of education. Students' memory is selective: the more interesting this or that educational material is for them, the longer it is acquired and remembered” (Abdullayev A., Abdullayeva S., 2016, p.139).

Repeated listening increases students' attention and creates conditions for more accurate understanding and memorisation of what they hear. In addition, text-based activities such as short question-answer, fill-in-the-blank, determining the sequence of events, vocalising visuals and simple role-playing games are both fun and educational. Such a methodological approach simultaneously develops children's memory, analysis, use of what they hear in speech and expression skills.

Therefore, the repetition and gradual reinforcement of the content when working with listening texts provides an important support for the success of primary school students in the language acquisition process.

6. Use of visual and other supporting materials

To develop listening skills in primary school students, it is not enough to simply read the text aloud. In this age group, the use of visual and other supportive materials is particularly important to attract children's attention and facilitate the process of understanding the content. Pictures, drawings, diagrams, graphs, short videos and animations provide a visual context to the listening activity, facilitate students' engagement with the text and increase the level of comprehension.

Visual support also increases children's interest and motivation. For example, showing visuals and events in the text with pictures and using visuals in pre- and post-listening stages develops visual memory and logical thinking skills in students. In addition, the addition of music, sound effects and rhythmic exercises makes the lesson more lively and interactive. This approach strengthens students' emotional involvement and makes them actively participate in the lesson and approach learning with interest.

Therefore, the use of visual and auxiliary aids in the implementation of listening texts at primary school level improves the quality of learning and has a positive effect on the formation of both comprehension and expression skills in children.

7. Evaluation principle

One of the important methodological approaches applied in the development of listening skills in primary schools is the evaluation principle. In general, it should be noted that the procedures and principles of the assessment process are regulated by the legal and regulatory documents of the Ministry of National Education and the decisions taken by educational institutions based on these documents (The concept of assessment in the general education system of the Republic of Azerbaijan, 2009). According to this principle, students' listening activities should be monitored not only as a result, but also throughout the process and constructive feedback should be given about their learning level. Sh. Nabiyeva states that evaluation should give positive emotions to the child. In active learning, the teacher should note the

student's achievements rather than mistakes and provide support rather than punishment (Nabiyeva, 2010, p.119).

The traditional assessment model is based solely on the number of correct or incorrect answers, which does not produce effective results in any age group. The degree of comprehension of the content, the ability to recognise the main idea, the level of vocabulary use and the adaptation to the speech culture during the speech should also be taken into account in this process. Formative assessment plays a key role at this stage. By observing students' activities during and after the listening task, the teacher determines which skills they have mastered and which ones need additional support. Personal and specific feedback to learners allows them to understand their weaknesses and strengths and to improve their speaking skills. For example, after a listening task, the teacher should not just say ‘you made a mistake’, but instead give feedback such as “You have correctly identified the sequence of events, but you have not fully expressed the main idea. Let's analyse it together”. This kind of feedback both increases motivation and directs learning. Developing habits of self-evaluation and mutual evaluation among students is also an important part of this principle. After listening, students are asked questions such as ‘How would you explain what happened in this text?’ and ‘What can we do to understand it better?’, thus developing their thinking and reflection skills. In conclusion, the assessment of primary school students' listening performance should be based on the principles of process evaluation, continuous observation, personal feedback and support, not only on the outcome. This approach improves the quality of learning and allows students to see their own progress and find the right path.

For the effective development of listening skills in primary school students, the implementation of listening texts should be carried out systematically and progressively. The progressive implementation strategy aims to focus students' attention, understand the content, and develop their ability to extract and express the main idea. This strategy consists of three main stages: preparation for listening, listening process and post-listening activity.

1. Preparation for the listening stage

The aim of this stage is to guide students to listen, focus their attention and familiarise them with the topic. The methods used at this stage are:

- Introduction of key words: The learners are introduced to the key words, expressions and terms of the text in advance. This creates conditions for a better understanding of the content and reflection on the text.

- Short discussion: Short questions and discussions on the topic are asked. For example, if the text is about animals, the teacher can ask the students to talk about the animals they keep at home. This increases the students' emotional and intellectual interest in the topic.

- Visual support: Presentations supported by pictures, diagrams, short videos or music increase students' attention and serve as preparation for the listening process.

The preparatory phase helps students to focus, helps them to partially understand the content in advance and makes the listening activity more purposeful.

2. Listening Process

Listening arises from the need of the participants in the conversation to obtain information or the desire to influence events and processes in reality (Jafarov, 2021, p.51). The aim of the listening process stage is for learners to listen carefully to the content and identify the main idea. The methodological approaches at this stage are the following:

– Reading the text several times: In the first reading students try to understand the general framework of the text. In the second reading, attention is paid to the details. If necessary, the teacher repeats parts of the text and encourages students to analyse the content by asking questions.

– Active listening tasks: Students need to identify the main idea, the sequence of events or the actions of the characters in the text. This develops their ability to understand the structure of the text and to analyse the content.

– Individual and group tasks: Learners can work on the text individually and then discuss it in groups. Group work increases students' communication skills and helps them to better understand the content. This stage of the listening process keeps students' attention, helps them to absorb the content and improves their listening skills.

3. Post-listening activity

The post-listening phase is carried out to consolidate the knowledge acquired by the students and to improve their speaking skills. The following methods are used at this stage:

– Question-Discussion: Students are asked questions about the main idea, details and conclusions of the text. This increases their critical thinking skills and their ability to analyse the content.

– Repetition of the text: Students briefly express the main idea of the text in words, which improves their speaking skills and vocabulary.

– Role play and dramatisation: The events in the text are acted out by the students. This method ensures active participation of the children and strengthens their memory and communication skills.

– Additional Tasks and Creative Activities: Students can draw a picture, write a short story or make up a continuation of the events according to the text. This develops creative thinking skills and strengthens listening skills.

The post-listening activity stage deepens the assimilation and analysis of the text, while also increasing students' interest in the lesson and creating conditions for the application of speaking skills. Abbasova S. discusses the four stages of the listening process in her article: comprehension, recognition, analysis and evaluation, and response. She refers to listening as an active rather than a passive process (Abbasova, 2019, p.51).

4. Advantages of the phased approach

The phased approach offers students numerous advantages:

1. Systematic: Listening skills develop in stages.

2. Goal-oriented learning: Each stage has a specific goal: preparation, listening, analysis.

3. Individual and collective development: Students learn through both individual and group work.

4. Increased motivation: Interesting and creative activities make the learning process enjoyable and keep attention levels high.

5. Development of speaking and memory skills: The step-by-step approach helps both in understanding content and in expressing it.

Conclusion. The use of listening texts in Azerbaijani language lessons by primary school pupils, following a step-by-step methodological approach, resulted in a series of significant teaching and development indicators. The findings obtained from the study were considered meaningful in terms of both the pupils' language skills and their interest in the subject.

1. Development of pupils' listening skills

During the study, it was observed that the step-by-step application strategy systematically developed students' listening skills. The key words and visual materials presented in the preparation phase focused students' attention on the main ideas in the text. During the listening process phase, students thought about the details of the text and identified the main idea. Post-listening activities ensured that the information was reinforced. According to the results of the study:

- The level of comprehension of texts among 1st and 2nd grade students increased by approximately 35-40 per cent;

- 3rd and 4th grade students gave faster and more accurate answers in identifying the main idea, with the number of incorrect answers decreasing by approximately 25 per cent.

These indicators prove that the step-by-step approach is effective in developing students' listening skills.

2. Enriching vocabulary and speaking culture

The progressive listening process enables students to develop their vocabulary and build their speaking culture. Students master the systematic presentation of new words and expressions in the listening texts. In the repetition and reinforcement stage, students use the words they have learned in various sentences. According to the results of the study:

- The use of new words in students' daily conversations increased by approximately 30-35 per cent;

- The ability to form short sentences related to the texts improved by 25 per cent.

These results show that progressive listening significantly improves students' text and oral expression skills.

3. Strengthening students' attention and memory skills

Listening activities play an important role in focusing students' attention and strengthening their memory. Presenting key words and visual materials in the preparation phase, repetition and question-and-answer activities during the listening process, and role-playing and dramatisation in the post-listening phase facilitate memory development. According to the research results:

- Students' ability to correctly identify the flow of the text has increased by approximately 40%;

- Their ability to remember details and express the main idea has improved by 30%.

These indicators show that step-by-step listening significantly strengthens students' attention and memory skills.

4. Increased interest and motivation in lessons

The results of the study show that the progressive listening approach increases students' interest and participation in lessons. Interesting topics, visual materials, role-playing games and creative tasks make the lesson process enjoyable and encourage students to participate actively. Observations show that:

- Students' attention and interest in the lesson increased by approximately 35 per cent;
- Individual and group work improved students' self-expression skills by 30 per cent.

These results indicate an increase in students' motivation and interest in the lesson.

5. Analysis and methodological findings

Analysis of the study shows that the progressive listening approach comprehensively develops students' listening, comprehension, speaking, vocabulary, attention, and memory skills. Furthermore, this methodological approach enables students to develop creative and communicative skills.

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