



The Role of Digitalization in Listening Skills Development in Schools of Ukraine

Iryna Simkova,¹Oksana Serheieva²

¹Professor, Igor Sikorsky Kyiv Polytechnic Institute, Ukraine

²Teacher, Igor Sikorsky Kyiv Polytechnic Institute, Ukraine

Corresponding Author: Iryna Simkova

Date of Submission: 07-09-2021

Date of Acceptance: 22-09-2021

ABSTRACT: This paper investigates the role of digitalization in listening skills development in secondary schools of Ukraine. Attention is paid to the analysis of digital technologies in the process of listening skills development in the secondary schools of Ukraine. The difficulties that pupils have in the process of listening skills development in English are identified. Authors determine the content and functions of listening skills in English classes. Research has allowed highlighting the positive role of digitalization in listening skills development in secondary schools of Ukraine within the pandemic period.

KEYWORDS: Digitalization, Listening skills, Language skills development, Digital technologies, Secondary Schools.

I. INTRODUCTION

Within the next few years, due to the pandemic situation all around the world, digitalization is set to become an important component in English language teaching in secondary schools of Ukraine. In this paper, the process of English listening skills development during shifting the instructional delivery mode from face-to-face to emergency remote teaching (ERT) at seven secondary schools of Ukraine is considered as a case study.

The past decade [1] has seen a renewed importance in the methods of listening skills development. There are two main reasons the first one is that until recently listening was considered quite a simple skill and the second one that during the last two years emergency remote teaching paid a lot of attention to the development of spoken interaction skills such as listening and speaking. It was also believed [2] that by paying much attention to the development of speaking skills, the students learn to understand speech without additional preparation. This idea has

not received general acceptance both in theory and in practice [3].

Although speaking and listening skills are closely related, it is precisely oral communication that is to be developed only under the conditions of using a specially developed technique.

It has now been suggested that even people with a high level of foreign language proficiency have difficulty understanding the natural speech of native speakers [4]. Psychologists [5] also argue that perception and understanding of usual speech is a rather complex activity. As others have highlighted [6] listening is defined as perceptual mental mnemonic activity. It is perceptual due to the realization of perception/reception and mental – due to the connection with the main mental operations: analysis, synthesis, concretization, induction, deduction, comparison; mnemonic – because there is a determination and the assimilation of the signs of linguistic and speech units, comparison with the standard, which is stored in memory.

It has been suggested [7; 8] that listening is the comprehension of audio-perceived speech. Listening and speaking are two components of oral speech. Without one, there can be no other. However, listening as a type of speech activity can be quite independent (for example, listening to lectures, reports, etc.).

Thus, listening is one of the most complex types of speech activity and should be developed independently and interdisciplinary with connection to other skills. In past decades schools that failed to embrace digital transformation failed in developing in their pupils social, economic, and cultural skills. In the current situation due to lockdown, it is inevitable to use digital technologies to solve many problems in education systems. The implementation of digital technologies allows pupils and teachers free and easy access to information.

The aim of our work is to extend current knowledge of the feasibility of using digital technologies in the process of listening skills development as a type of speech activity of pupils of



secondary schools and to identify the most optimal conditions for the use of these technologies. For this purpose, we will determine the content and functions of listening skills in English classes; identify the difficulties that pupils have in the process of listening skills development in English; explore the

II. RESEARCH METHODS

To achieve the goals of the study, a complex of interrelated methods of scientific research has been used. The main theoretical methods used in the study are the generalization of pedagogical, psychological, and linguistics literature to consider the determine the content and functions of listening skills in English classes; the comparative analysis to stipulate the identify the difficulties that pupils have in the process of listening skills development in English; the description of the possibilities of using digital technologies for listening skills development at secondary schools of Ukraine.

The empirical methods used in the paper are the observation of listening skills development during the English classes, the quantitative and qualitative analysis of the survey to stipulate the role of digitalization in listening skills development in secondary schools of Ukraine.

To illustrate the role of digitalization in listening skills development in secondary schools, the survey was carried out among 50 English teachers from seven secondary schools in Kyiv, Ukraine. The survey was conducted from April to June 2020. Interviews were semi-structured and performed informally. The semi-structured interview was chosen based on the idea that it is providing an opportunity to explore additional information about teachers' feelings concerning their usage of digital technologies for the listening skills development at

III. RESULTS and DISCUSSION

The quantitative and qualitative analysis of experimental data indicates that the sample was 50 were recruited with a response rate of 100 %. We obtained the following results. Approximately two-thirds of the participants (62 %) said was agree that attending training or webinars is quite helpful for them in choosing proper digital resources to develop pupils' listening skills.

The majority of respondents strongly agree that using digital technologies is engaging for pupils and they feel excited about using new digital resources in English classes. On question 4 Over half percent of those surveyed reported that about 86% of pupils like to attend English classes and almost 90% of pupils easily deal with digital resources proposed by teachers. At the same time questioned teachers indicated that almost 85% of the

possibilities of using digital technologies for listening skills development at secondary schools of Ukraine.

secondary school. The interview takes not more than 10 minutes for each teacher.

No	Question	Type of answer
1	Do you need to attend additional training or webinars to choose proper digital resources to develop pupils' listening skills?	Strongly Agree – Agree – Disagree – Strongly Disagree
2	Do your pupils feel happy about using digital resources to develop their listening skills?	Strongly Agree – Agree – Disagree – Strongly Disagree
3	What kind of digital resources do you usually use to develop pupils listening skills?	Open answer
4	How do you know that digital resources chosen by you enhance pupils listening skills?	Open answer

Figure 1 The example of questionnaires proposed to teachers

The teachers who participated in the survey have to answer four questions. For questions 1 and 2 the teachers' answers may vary from Strongly Agree – Agree – Disagree – Strongly Disagree.

In the answer to questions, 3 and 4 teachers must provide more detailed information.

schoolchildren have difficulty in understanding oral speech.

The 42 subjects who completed the questionnaire replied that they are sure that using digital technology helps their pupils to understand speech much more easily, to participate in communication actively, and also increase pupils' interest in the subject. Among digital resources used by teachers in English classes to enhance the development of pupils' listening skills were mentioned – *ShowMe* *Interactive Whiteboard* (whiteboard tool for teachers to check understanding of listening tasks); *Buncee* (helps teachers visualize, communicate, and engage with classroom concepts); *WeVideo* (helps teachers use video creatively to engage students in learning); *VoiceThread* (allows teachers and pupils to create and share conversations on videos, pictures, and more).

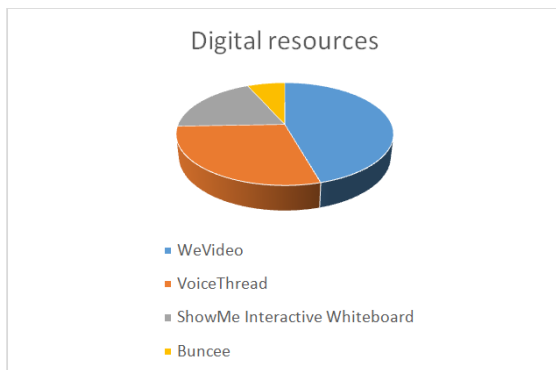


Figure 2. Digital resources used by teachers to develop pupils listening skills

An analysis of recent findings regarding using digital technologies in the development of listening skills as a type of speech activity of secondary school students has led to the suggestion that it is really expedient.

A fundamental issue of listening skills is that they are based on natural ability, which improves with the individual development of a pupil and provides an opportunity to understand audio information, store it in memory, select and evaluate it according to interests or assigned tasks.

Like any audio text, text for listening has its own composition, structure, and semantic organization. Unlike written text, it is intonationally designed, and its reconstruction is predetermined by the appropriate tempo, one-off, and irreversibility of perception, contact of communicants, and the direction of communication, which is supported by the pair of lingual means.

In secondary school, there are mainly two types of audio texts used for listening skills development, they are descriptive text and story. In the practice of teaching the English language, listening texts should be authentic, accessible in content and language composition, short in duration, mostly monothematic. In the history of listening as one of the most complex types of speech activity, the focus has been made on the main difficulties in its development, such as language difficulties and cultural difficulties.

The first one connected with the features of the listening procedure, speech activity of the listener (a wide range of topics, rich lexical material, fast rate of speech, etc.), and the knowledge of the difference between speaking and writing, difference between authentic texts and educational texts, and knowledge of different styles.

The second one is connected with sociolinguistic and sociocultural components of communicative competence; it means that English

should be studied in the context of a particular culture.

Successful development of listening skills presupposes the removal or overcoming of the mentioned difficulties. The pupils live in the modern world that is suffused with streams of information, and in the society that is called informational due to the intensive informatization of all types of human activity. The introduction of digitalization into education is at the first place in the reform of the new Ukrainian school. In recent years teachers have been working through a pandemic with a great deal of uncertainty, thus they need to understand the role of digitalization in modern education. A recent review of the literature on this topic [9; 10] found that digitalization in many areas highlights that our society requires pupils to be ready to study work and live in a world where it is important to possess the proficiency level in the English language, the ability to communicate in writing and spoken interaction without mediators, to think and act critically. The main goal of using digital technologies at secondary schools is preparing a new generation to operate in the information society, increasing the quality and effectiveness of education. Digitalization of secondary schools is an integral part of the digitalization of new Ukrainian schools.

Initial studies executed using the conditions described above found out that among resources that teachers proposed to their pupils to develop their listening skills within the Emergency remote teaching digital technologies and video podcasts are used much more actively than audiobooks.

When the subjects were asked about teaching resources the majority commented that video podcasts were used by 46% of survey participants, digital technologies are adopted by 53% of teachers while audiobooks are used by 32% of respondents.

Using video podcasts in developing listening skills.

The best way to get acquainted with pupils with the life of people in English-speaking countries is carried out through the text and illustrations to it. Rahimi & Katal [11] has already noted that it is quite important to give pupils an idea of the life, traditions, and culture of English-speaking countries. Instructional video podcasts can help. They contribute to the development of motivation for the spoken interaction of pupils, as well as a certain degree of individualization of training.

Allen Moore & Russell Smith [12] mentioned another advantage of video podcasts that is the ability to impact students emotionally. The use of video podcasts promotes critical thinking, students' attention, and their memory.



Watching podcasts during the lesson can generate an atmosphere of collective cognitive activity. Even pupils with low knowledge become attentive. In order to understand the content of the video podcast, pupils need to make some effort. Thus, primary attention turns into active attention and it has a beneficial effect on the process of memorization.

In [13] and [14] authors suggest that the process of listening skills development with the video podcasts as a tool can be divided into four stages: 1. Preparatory (lead-in); 2. perception; 3. control of main content understanding (follow-up); 4. development of listening skills and speaking skills.

To perform all tasks correctly pupils need to grasp the general meaning of the podcast as well as remember certain details, and then be ready to evaluate the events, describe main characters, use the vocabulary from the video podcasts.

Using audiobooks in developing listening skills.

The most remarkable findings are that teachers use audiobooks released by reputable foreign English-language publishers, such as Oxford University Press, Penguin, Cambridge University Press, Express Publishing, Longman. The reason is that audiobooks are colorfully illustrated, they are easy to

Digital technologies in developing listening skills.

In the literature [17; 18], the usage of digital technologies in developing listening is considered as an activity that engages and motivates pupils to study the English language and expanding their knowledge and experience. It helps pupils to be prepared for real-life communication outside the school, for example, pupils acquire knowledge of working with digital applications, communicate on the Internet with classmates. The usage of digital technologies develops in pupils the ability to cope with real-life communication situations outside the school, where can occur the lack of the available language resources or they may not be sufficient. Digital technologies are becoming the main means of access to various applications and platforms, which is one of the most effective aspects of the educational process in modern world

IV. CONCLUSION

The evidence from this study suggests that the use of digital technologies in the educational process promotes intensification of English language training and an increase in the level of pupils' motivation. We have obtained comprehensive results demonstrating that with digital technologies pupils perceive language knowledge and develop listening skills much more

read, always have a musical and/or sound accompaniment, as well as role-playing dubbing of the text.

In our country, these audiobooks can be used by secondary school teachers to develop not only reading but listening skills as well. They usually apply adapted artwork and range according to levels from A1 to C1. In most cases, the use of audiobooks is supported by the performance of exercises, essay writing, discussions, and role-plays.

Some methodologists emphasized [15; 16] that tasks and exercises based on the literary text are inexhaustible since the audiobooks themselves are unique and rich. Listening to audiobooks increases pupils' knowledge concerning the English-speaking customs and traditions, and authors. The knowledge can be enlarged in classes of foreign literature. Discussions dedicated ideas got from listening to audiobooks develop 4 C's skills; creativity, critical thinking, collaboration, and of course communication and thus need to be carefully planned by teachers and conducted systematically. It helps pupils feel that they are important, their ideas are appreciated, and turn them into active participants in the educational process.

challenges.

Digitalization offers pupils and teachers a variety of information and resources, applications, and platforms that can help pupils develop their listening skills to elicit evidence of learning.

Taking into account the pandemic periods and lockdowns from spring 2019 till today the reasons for using digital technologies are evident. It facilitates robust, collaborative learning environments, and increases pupils' engagement, morale, and community, which is extremely important for pupils.

To use digital technologies teachers must be well acquainted with the gamification approach as far as digital tools are abundant and most of them include games content [19]. Thus their aim is to support pupils with the knowledge, motivate them to develop in language skills effectively. We also identified the difficulties that pupils have in the process of listening skills development in English such as language difficulties and sociocultural difficulties.

The present findings have important implications for solving problems connected with the possibilities of using digital technologies for listening skills development at secondary schools of Ukraine. Our results are encouraging and should be validated by a larger sample size.



An important issue to resolve for future studies is the development of internal and external motivation for developing other (except listening) English language skills with the help of digital technologies.

REFERENCES

- [1]. Gulec, S., Durmus, N. 2015. "A Study Aiming to Develop Listening Skills of Elementary second Grade Students". *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, Vol. 191 <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2015.04.487>
- [2]. Richards, Jack C. 1990. "Conversationally speaking: Approaches to the teaching of conversation". In Jack C. Richards, *The Language Teaching Matrix*. New York: Cambridge University Press, pp. 67–85
- [3]. Murillo Suárez, J. L., García Molina, K., Demera Arias, R., Castro Carvajal, W. S., & Fajardo Pachón, E. 2013. "Learning strategies to develop the speaking and listening skills based on Rebecca Oxford's taxonomy in students from six to twelve years old of Saturday's program from Liceo Hermano Miguel La Salle". Retrieved from https://ciencia.lasalle.edu.co/lic_lenguas/690
- [4]. Gilakjani, A. P. & Sabouri, N. B. 2016. "Learners' Listening Comprehension Difficulties in English Language Learning: A Literature Review". *English Language Teaching*; Vol. 9, No. 6. doi: 10.5539/elt.v9n6p123
- [5]. Sedgwick, A. & Stothard, J. 2019. "An exploration of educational psychologists' perceptions, knowledge and practices regarding speech, language and communication needs". *Educational Psychology in Practice*, 35:3, 307-325, DOI: 10.1080/02667363.2019.1598939
- [6]. National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. 2018. *How People Learn II: Learners, Contexts, and Cultures*. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press. doi: <https://doi.org/10.17226/24783>.
- [7]. Heald, S.L.M. and Nusbaum, H.C. 2014. "Talker variability in audio-visual speech perception". *Front. Psychol.* 5:698. doi: [10.3389/fpsyg.2014.00698](https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2014.00698)
- [8]. Getzmann, S., Klatt, L.-I., Schneider, D., Begau, A. & Wascher, E. 2020. "EEG correlates of lateralized shifts of attention in a dynamic multi-talker speech perception scenario". *Hearing Research*, 108077.
- [9]. Rost, M. 2009. "Teacher Development Interactive: Listening. White Plains". NY: Pearson Longman
- [10]. Kodrle, S. and Savchenko, A. 2021. "Digital educational media in foreign language teaching and learning". *E3S Web of Conferences* 273, 12018
- [11]. Rahimi, M., & Katal, M. 2012. "The Role of Metacognitive Listening Strategies Awareness and Podcast-Use Readiness in Using Podcasting for Learning English as a Foreign Language". *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 31, 73-81. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2011.12.019>
- [12]. Allen Moore, W., & Russell Smith, A. 2012. "Effects of video podcasting on psychomotor and cognitive performance, attitudes and study behaviour of student physical therapists". *Innovations in education and teaching international*, 49(4), 401-414.
- [13]. Tolulope, A. E., Adenubi, O. S., & Oluwole, F. C. 2015. "Evaluating Undergraduates attitude towards the use of podcast for learning selected Educational Technology concepts". *Global Media Journal*.
- [14]. Ho, C.-T. B., Chou, Y.-H. D., & Fang, H.-Y. V. 2016. "Technology Adoption of Podcast in Language Learning: Using Taiwan and China as Examples". *International Journal of e-Education, e-Business, e-Management and e-Learning*, 6(1), 1.
- [15]. Kartal, G. 2017. "The Effects of Audiobooks on EFL Students' Listening Comprehension". *The Reading Matrix*. 17(1):112-123
- [16]. Takkac, M., & Akdemir, A.S. 2015. Defining listeners in second language (L2) listening: investigating the Characteristics of language learners as listeners. *International Journal on New Trends in Education and Their Implications*, 6(2), 116-141
- [17]. Lowman, J. 2014. "Exploring the use of podcasts and vodcasts: Multimedia tools for word learning". *Computers in the Schools*, 31(4), 251-270
- [18]. Carmen-Ricoy, M., & Da Silva-Couto, M. J. V. 2016. "Digital mobile devices and skills to use in the "knowledge society". *Convergencia*, 23(70), 59-85.



- [19]. Baranova, A. R., & Ladner, R. A. 2016. "Role of a game as a mechanism for maintenance of students' educational motives when learning a foreign language". *Social Sciences (Pakistan)*, 11(14), 3623-3626.