



## THE ROLE OF COMPUTER TECHNOLOGIES IN TEACHING LISTENING

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### ABOUT ARTICLE

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**Abstract:** This article focuses on using contemporary digital technology to teach listening in English. It describes the fundamentals of listening as well as the overall approach teachers should take to help students improve their listening abilities, the accessible digital technologies were taken into consideration as components of domestic and authentic pedagogical and methodological kits for teaching English; Classification and analysis of third-party information sources can be applied to enhance the efficacy of instruction in the development of listening skills.

### INTRODUCTION

In the 21st century, one of the main trends in education has become the use of digital technologies at all stages of education and in all subject areas, including when teaching foreign languages. In the process of globalization and, as a result, the establishment of English as the language of international communication, the demand for educational services in the field of learning English is constantly growing. In 2020, due to the Covid-19 pandemic and the widespread use of quarantine measures, most educational institutions were switched to distance learning. In this regard, even those teachers who sought to avoid using technology due to their conservative views on the pedagogical process were forced to start mastering them. This process also affected language courses and private practice teachers. Thus, the possession of modern digital technologies and their application in teaching has become one of the most sought-after professional skills of English language teachers. Due to the introduction of epidemiological restrictions in connection with the Covid-19 pandemic, not only institutions providing educational services, but also organizations related to other sectors of the economy were forced to switch to the remote mode. Most of the communication, including international, has moved into the field of calls (telephone or using various messengers) and video conferences. In this regard, the need for people to master the skill of perception of oral speech (listening) in English, as the language of international communication, has increased. Thus, English

language teachers are faced with the task of improving the effectiveness of teaching listening skills in English in the context of using distance and e-learning using modern information technologies.

Listening is a receptive type of speech activity, which is the simultaneous perception and understanding of speech by ear. The mastery of listening implies the integrative mastery of auditory-pronunciation and lexical-grammatical skills. The former imply the ability to quickly and simultaneously perceive and recognize the phonetic code, and the latter understand and recognize the grammatical structures and vocabulary used in the utterance.

The peculiarity of listening (unlike other types of speech activity) is that the speed and form of presentation of information from speakers (carriers) does not depend on the teacher and students when using authentic sources or in direct personal communication, and also that the listener in most situations does not have the opportunity to return to an obscure fragment language material and "rewind" it (if it's not about a recorded video or podcast): for example, in a situation of personal communication, you can only ask the interlocutor again, and not re-listen to his remark. The results of listening to a particular material depend on its length, the level of complexity of the content, its adaptation to the level of the student, the presence of visual reinforcement, noise interference, the general sound background when listening, the presence of accents in speakers, the characteristics of their voice and manner of conversation. Nevertheless, a teacher can help in the development of speech skills and auditory memory, reactions; suggest strategies for memorizing speech material; teach to highlight the main thing in the speech flow and understand the meaning of a single utterance. Familiarity with the language patterns of the language being studied helps in the formation of a linguistic guess, and setting the context of the listening speech situation will help students in the process of probabilistic content prediction. And knowledge of individual and age characteristics will give the teacher the opportunity to use an individual approach to learning.

One of the main features of modern schoolchildren and students from 18 to 30 years old is that they are familiar with modern digital technologies (computers, tablets, smartphones) from an early age. They are used to receiving information through these channels, mainly via the Internet. Accordingly, in order to organize a comfortable and effective educational environment, these tools must be available to them. For example, watching popular science videos will attract more attention, and accordingly will give a better result (of course, with properly selected tasks for it) than reading popular science literature. This does not mean that it is necessary to turn an educational institution into an entertainment center, but the use of effective and relevant tools is necessary if the school is trying to teach children to be effective and in demand in modern society, which is defined as "informational".

In the information society, education is not focused on obtaining specific knowledge, skills and abilities, but on the ability to accept, process information, share it, and generate new ones based on existing ones. Accordingly, the informatization of education is not just the use of computers as learning tools. All key components of learning are changing: goals, objectives, methods, techniques, content, means and form of learning. Even the role of the teacher is changing: he is no longer a source of information as such, but performs the function of a mentor, guide and consultant. Its task is to prepare students for full and effective participation in all spheres of life in an information society.

To do this, the teacher himself must have a number of ICT competencies:

- Be able to search, select and process additional information for the learning process using web resources;
- Use various information technologies in training.
- Be able to develop their own web resources and computer materials for training and control

- Be able to find and apply ready-made multimedia developments and computer programs.
- To use the extensive information base of the Internet to verify information: of course, one of the main professional competencies of a teacher is knowledge of his subject, but anyone can make mistakes or not possess the full information (including the compiler of the textbook).

Moreover, it is necessary to teach this skill to students as well. Information in all spheres of life is constantly outdated and requires verification and clarification, respectively, the ability to identify relevant and correct information using a variety of sources is extremely relevant.

In most cases, English language teaching both in public schools and in language courses is conducted on the basis of one of the numerous educational and methodological kits (hereinafter - UMK), both domestic and authentic. In authentic UMCS of the "Speakout" or "Outcomes" type, the content of exercises in workbooks and control tests are transformed into an electronic learning environment from the publisher. Students have the opportunity to perform them both on paper and on a special virtual learning platform. Audio and video files from authentic sources (BBC or National Geographic documentaries) are used as visual materials, which can be viewed on the proposed disc or on the same website, and a set of exercises based on them has been developed in each thematic section of the textbook.

School teachers are limited in their choice of teaching materials by the Federal list of textbooks approved for use in public educational institutions. Unfortunately, in those educational and methodological complexes that are allowed for use, the digital part of the UMK is often reduced to electronic versions of textbooks, test books and workbooks, as well as audio textbooks recorded on disk or posted in open access. But teachers can prepare methodological materials by analogy with authentic textbooks and use them as additional materials in their lessons. Teachers of private language schools, courses and higher educational institutions should not neglect the use of the digital part of the textbooks used.

Among the many online resources dedicated to learning English and providing access to educational and methodological materials, we will highlight those that are advisable to use when teaching listening in English. Among them, the following groups can be distinguished:

- Tools for converting written speech into oral speech.
- Websites with prepared mini-lessons based on audio and video material.
- Websites specializing in training listening skills based on authentic songs.
- Tools for processing audio and video material.
- Tools for storing methodological materials.
- Tools for monitoring the development of listening skills.
- Databases for the independent formation of a methodological base.
- Resources for practicing listening skills for extracurricular self-study of students.

Groups in detail.

Specific listening learning tools include Internet resources specializing in converting any text (including teaching) into audio format while preserving the intonation and pronunciation of native speakers, which allows the text to sound more natural than with classical mechanical voicing (built-in text voiceover in online translators such as Yandex. Translator and Google Translation). Moreover, it is possible to choose the age, gender and accent (British, Spanish, American, French, etc.) of the "speakers". Examples of these resources:

Natural Readers offers 20 English-speaking "speakers" for voice acting, representing American, British, and Australian accents, 19 speech speed options and the ability to download the resulting audio

recording in mp3 format. The sites ReadSpeaker, Ttsreader, and Readthewords have similar functionality.

Synthesisia. It differs from the previous versions in that it allows you to synthesize not only audio, but also video sequences using neural network technologies based on text. In this way, the teacher can receive educational audio material with visual reinforcement.

One of the most popular materials in English among students is songs. Naturally, they cannot be called ideal teaching material, since the mechanism of sound production itself differs during singing, pronunciation is distorted for greater melodiousness of sound. However, understanding songs is a strong enough motive when learning English for a certain group of students. Therefore, the teacher should not neglect the use of songs in the classroom. To do this, you can use both common song databases (Yandex Music, iTunes, Spotify, Youtube Music) and their lyrics (lyrics.com or amalgam-lab.com), as well as special resources such as:

Lyricstraining. The site contains a large number of video clips for songs in different languages, including English. The video clip contains subtitles in the language of sound, in which some words are omitted (the number of missing words depends on the difficulty level chosen by the player), which must be filled in by ear. The site has a game interface with scoring for successes and failures. That is, the motivational component is made in a playful way, which allows you to avoid excessive stress when performing an listening task, which for most students is associated with a certain level of stress.

LyricsGaps. This site is made in a rather outdated design, but has a broader functionality for learning. For example, exercises have been compiled for each clip to highlight and consolidate stable phrases that sounded in the song. There is also a section for teachers where you can independently compose exercises for songs or create flash cards based on them.

Tuneintoenglish – has functionality similar to the sites described above, but is notable for the teachers' association for the exchange of methodological developments on the songs presented on the site.

Most teachers work in a mode of increased academic workload and the independent development of additional methodological resources may not be possible. In this situation, it is possible to use ready-made mini-lessons to develop listening skills. They can be found on the following resources:

Ello – this site offers an extensive collection of lessons for the development of listening: video fragments with answers from speakers from different countries (different ages, different accents, different sound environments) to problematic issues, animated news videos and videos illustrating idioms, audio lessons based on fragments of news reports and podcasts. All are accompanied by scripts with highlighted key vocabulary and exercises of various types to understand general and detailed information, details, and determining the truth of a statement.

ESL-lab – has similar functionality to Ello, but the site has selected lessons on topics that are more common in the curricula of schools and courses, respectively, it will be easier for the teacher to choose material that complements the lesson on a specific topic. In addition, there is a division of lessons by difficulty (easy-intermediate-difficult). There is also a series of video lessons on regional studies.

Ezslang – has similar functionality, but contains lessons on topics of practical importance for adult learners: English for travel, job search, education abroad, romantic relationships.

BBC Learning English – the site has many designed lessons for a variety of purposes. Special attention should be paid to the developed course "5 days to become a better listener" (improve your listening skills in 5 days), which can be used in classes with students experiencing difficulties with listening or recommended for independent study.

However, if a teacher has the opportunity to form his own methodological library or wants to offer his students resources for independent practice, many opportunities open up to him:

- Resources with audiobooks in English (audible.com, librivox.org, liteka.ru/english/library, twirpx, digitalbook.io, loyalbooks.com, openculture.com/freeaudiobooks, learnoutloud.com/Free-Audiobooks).
- Resources with podcasts in English (yandex.music and iTunes as common podcast databases; eslpod.com, teacherluke.co.uk, businessenglishpod.com, betteratenglish.com, voanews.com as educational podcasts).
- Resources with videos in English (Youtube, Tiktok, Netflix, ororo.tv).
- Resources in radio format in English (talkzone.com, onlineradiobox.com/uk, BBC radio).
- Resources with music in English (yandex.music, itunes, vkmusic).

Separately, it is necessary to note the new social network Club house, which has been developing rapidly over the past year. Its peculiarity is that only the voice communication format is available to users. There are "interest rooms" on the social network where you can find interlocutors in any language on any topic of interest. This social network is ideal for developing speaking and listening skills in English, as there is an opportunity to practice in the language being studied in the field of personal interests with people of different ages, genders, speakers of different dialects and accents with different pronunciation features. The format of the social network also contributes to the development of conversational clubs for language learners from different countries. Specific tools for teachers when teaching listening can be programs for correcting audio tracks, which allow you to slow down, accelerate, clear out extraneous noise and cut audio material into convenient (necessary) fragments: Audacity, Nero WaveEditor, WavePad, mp3DirectCut, etc. Programs that allow you to save audio and video tracks from various sources will also be useful. Sites: savefrom.net, downloadmaster, etc.

To store the methodological base, it makes sense to use cloud storage such as Yandex.Disk or Google.disk, which are convenient with a large amount of memory provided and the ability to manage access to materials.

Thus, modern digital technologies allow English language teachers and self-learners to use a variety of educational resources and sources of educational and authentic audio and video materials to develop listening skills and modify them to suit their needs and interests. The use of digital technologies in the modern educational process is not only possible, but also necessary to achieve educational goals.

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