Секция «Методика преподавания иностранных языков и лингводидактика: Актуальные проблемы методики преподавания иностранных языков»

TED Talks as a Tool for Teaching Public Speaking Skills

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Today public speaking is present in numerous spheres of our life: politics, economics, advertising, art, science, religion, education, etc. Every person from time to time encounters the necessity of delivering a speech publicly. This requires particular skills to be developed. Furthermore, the importance of developing public speaking skills is preconditioned by the requirements of the Federal State Educational Standard of the Russian Federation for secondary and high school students. Thus, the Federal State Educational Standard for secondary school prescribes developing such skills as making reports and oral presentations of research and project results. As far as higher education is concerned, the Federal State Educational Standard includes a series of competences connected with logic and coherent presenting research results in foreign languages.

However, despite the fact that nowadays this problem is becoming more and more topical the necessity of teaching public speaking is underestimated. Having analyzed various definitions of the notion "public speech" we can conclude that it is a particular type of speech that requires the speaker to have special skills and therefore involves special methods and teaching tools. Prof. Jack C. Richards in his book "Teaching Listening and Speaking: From Theory to Practice" instead of "public speech" uses the term "talk as performance" and defines performance as a public talk which often follows a recognizable format. He singles out the main features of talk as performance:

1. a focus on both message and audience;
2. predictable organization and sequencing;
3. importance of both form and accuracy;
4. language peculiarities: language is more like written language;
5. often monologue character [1].

On this basis, the necessity to apply special methods, techniques and instruments for teaching public speech does not give rise to doubts. Prof. Richards emphasizes the importance of using examples or models of speeches, oral presentations through video or audio recordings or written examples. In our opinion, website TED.com can serve as a source of such models.

TED (Technology, Entertainment, Design) is a nonprofit devoted to spreading ideas, usually in the form of short, powerful talks (18 minutes or less). TED began in 1984 as a conference where Technology, Entertainment and Design converged, and today covers almost all topics — from science to business to global issues — in more than 100 languages [2]. The global set of conferences is run under the slogan "Ideas Worth Spreading". The emphasis is on the educational aspect. Great thinkers from different parts of the world give talks on various subjects: science, art, design, politics, culture, business, global issues, etc. Past speakers include such famous people as Bill Klinton, Bill Gates, Sting, and many Nobel Prize winners.

Due to the broad variety of topics discussed TED.com is actively used at foreign schools for teaching various disciplines including English as a foreign language (but mostly for developing listening comprehension skills). We propose using TED Talks for developing public speaking

skills. For this purpose we worked out 2 algorithms. Usage of this or that algorithm depends upon the level of monologue skills students have. Working with algorithms involves 2 stages which are subdivided into several steps. Stage 1 is aimed at developing listening comprehension skills. Stage 2 is aimed at developing monologic skills. It includes analyzing a TED Talk from different perspectives. Students analyze the structure of the talk (so called, "deconstruction" of the text), then - linguistic and extra linguistic means used by the speaker from the point of view of the effect produced on the audience. Students also work with the prosodic aspect of the speech. Such components of prosody as intonation, pausation, rhythm, and tempo are an essential part of a public talk and therefore they require special attention while teaching public speaking. Working with a TED Talk can involve reproduction of the speech analyzed (for those students, for whom producing their own talks without reproduction of the analyzed TED Talk can cause difficulties). The final step is producing talks by students on their own.

The worked out algorithms were used for experimental teaching conducted on the basis of the first year students of the educational program "Linguistics" (Pskov SU). As a result students presented their own public speeches on a certain topic. The surveys conducted after the experimental teaching revealed that the majority of students found TED Talks effective for developing public speaking skills. Students also noted that using TED Talks was quite efficient for developing listening skills, enlarging vocabulary and broadening the mind.

To conclude, the experimental teaching revealed that TED talks can be an effective tool for developing public speaking skills. The algorithms proposed can be used for teaching university students and senior school students as well.

Источники и литература

1) Richards Jack C. Teaching Listening and Speaking From Theory to Practice. New York, 2008.
2) TED Ideas Worth Spreading: http://www.ted.com/about/our-organization

Иллюстрации

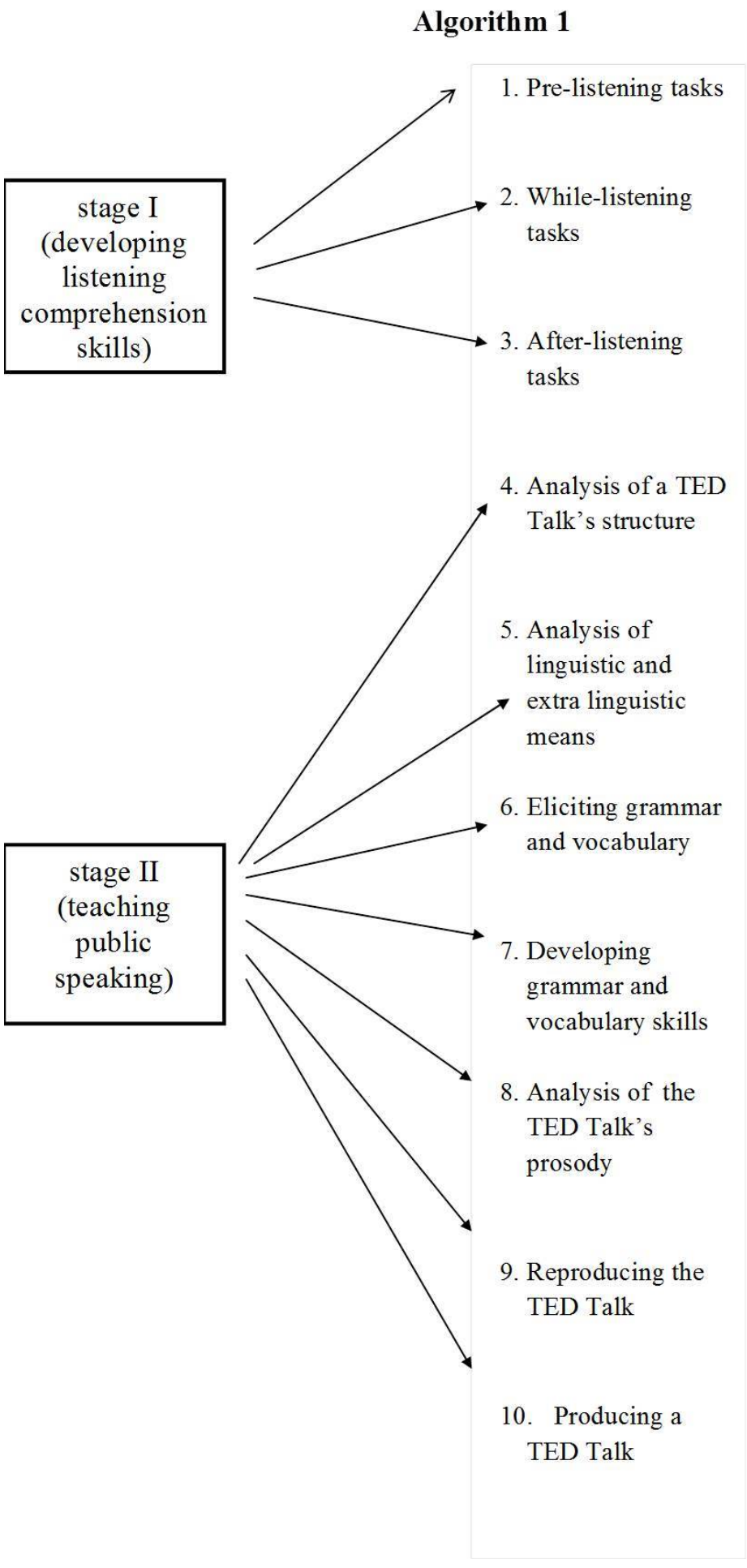

Рис. 1. Algorithm 1

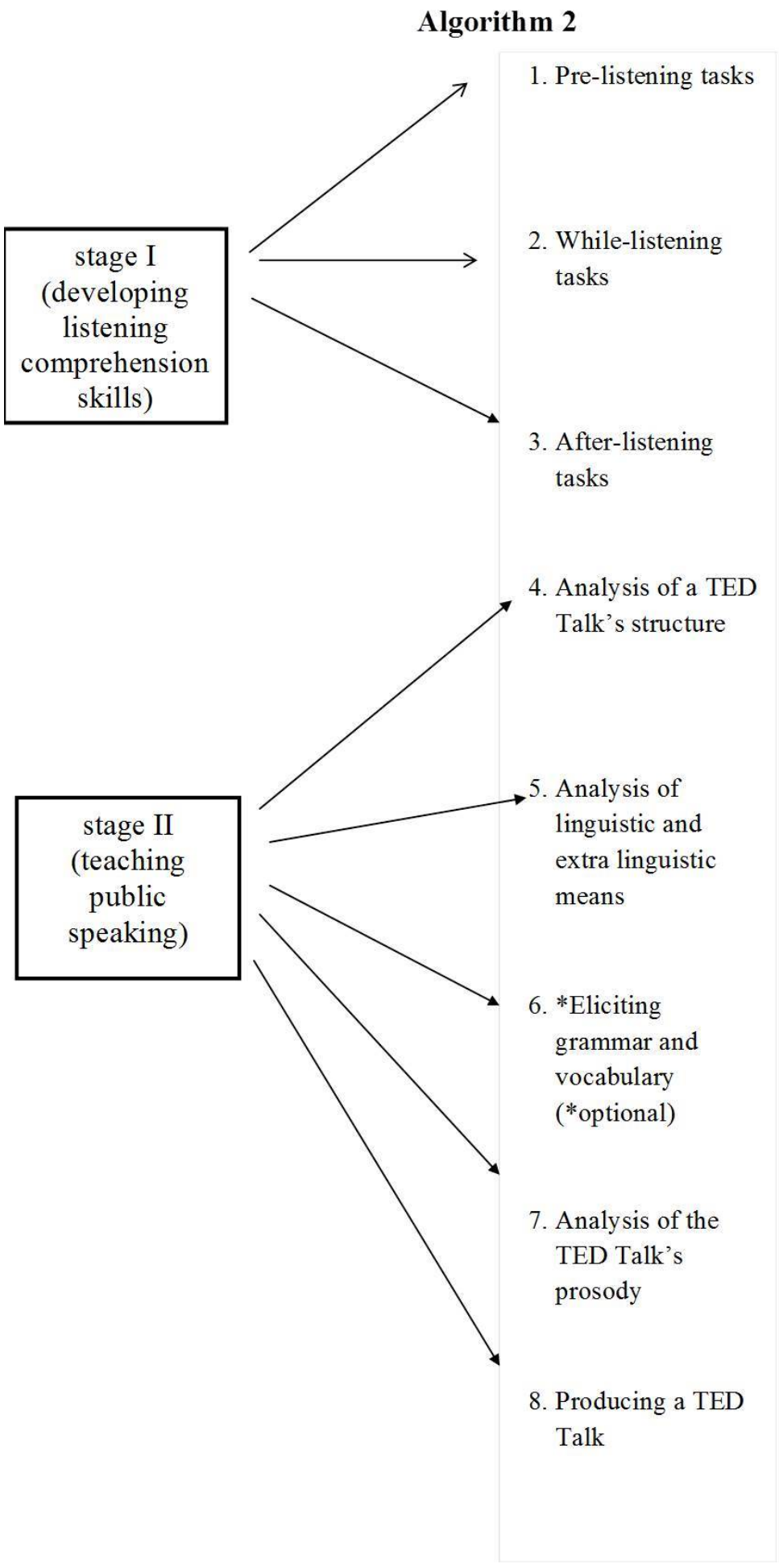

Рис. 2. Algorithm 2