

## HOW TO IMPROVE EFL LEARNERS' LISTENING COMPREHENSION

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**Annotation:** Let me introduce my article with a quote by the famous writer Ernest Hemingway. He said, “When people talk, listen completely. Most people never listen”. In this article, I am going to explain the benefits and tips of listening comprehension and how to improve it. First of all, listening comprehension helps you develop your appreciation for other people; you understand more about the world and also communicate more effectively overall. If you are listening more effectively, once you speak, your message is much more likely to hit the target. In this article, some practical suggestions are highlighted, and they can be useful for those who want to improve their listening skills.

**Keywords:** *listening comprehension, EFL learners, practice, tips, advantages of listening comprehension.*

**Introduction.** How do infants learn? What is their first exposure to language? The answer is listening. We all listened before we spoke and before we read and wrote. Even our most kinesthetic students have a learning period that began with listening. The International Listening Association claims that 85 percent of a student's learning is derived from listening [1, p. 10]. It is again proof that we can improve students learning by teaching them to listen well.

Listening is a receptive skill which means it involves responding to language rather than producing it. Listening involves understanding spoken language (written and spoken language), various speeds of speech and various accents. The main difference between

them is spoken language is generally less planned and less well structured than written language. Understanding various speeds of speech and various accents are complicated. Some people speak more slowly and with more pauses or on the contrary others speak fast and with few pauses. These features are part of connected speech, i.e. spoken language in which words join together to form a connected stream of sounds [3, p. 44].

There are several different listening sub-skills. These are the following:

1. Listening for gist/global understanding – means you listen to a text and understand the general meaning of it, without paying attention to specific details. When the learner tries to understand what is happening even if he or she cannot understand every single words or sentences. They try to pick up key words, intonation or other clues so to make a guess at the meaning.  
For example, words such as cold, snow, freezing, snowball, sled have their own meanings but when you hear the words in a listening passage, they help you understand the context which they are used in the context of winter.
2. Listening for specific information – means while we are listening any kind of listening passage we mainly focus our attention on specific information. It can be names, dates, places, hours etc. For example, let us assume you are at the airport and you listen to an announcement for specific information. You might simply need to hear some time, but when listening to the specific information you only focus on which information is essential for you.
3. Listening for detail information – when you are listening to a speaker sometimes you just want to get specific information

or particular detail. For example, you might be listening to a recorded phone message for a teaching and all you really want to know is when the teaching will start. You do not care about the rest of it. Of course, it is obviously clear that listening for a particular details or pieces of information in the recording can be pretty tough. You can tackle this problem by using these tips:

- 1) Use key words and phrases as alerts to help you find information;
  - 2) Practice rephrasing information so you will not loose track;
  - 3) You can also take bullet-point notes that helps you remember everything;
4. Infer attitude – means students listen to identify the difference between what the speaker says and what they actually mean. It is like an idea or conclusion that is drawn from evidence or reason. We can make inferences by reading or listening something. Let us imagine, you are listening an audiobook and then, after the first chapter questions arise. So you should try to define each question based on your recording.
5. Listening intensively – this type of listening subskill is mainly used on form. When you do intensive listening, you are paying too much attention to pronunciation, grammar and vocabulary, rather than overall meaning. There are many useful websites you can use to do intensive listening practice. Duolingo is a website that uses mixture of audio and written activities. FuentU is another website where you can enhance your listening by watching video. This is a fun, flexible and useful option that you can use for both intensive and extensive listening. You can also use LyricsTraing in order to guided activity. This program offers brief music videos with exercises. You can choose any videos depending on your level of knowledge and are asked to fill in words. Such type of listening practice forces you to focus on structure and vocabulary.
6. Listening extensively – it focuses on longer activity. Unlike intensive listening, ex-

tensive listening focuses on overall understanding. With this kind of listening practice you do not have to focus on grammar rules or translate each word. It is like listening for pleasure. It helps students understand spoken language in real-word context. For extensive listening you can listen to audiobooks. But do not forget to choose the correct audiobook according to your difficulty level, otherwise you will face a problem. You can also do practice with watching authentic media. i.e. watching movies, TV and other entertainment. YouTube is a massive treasure of material for virtually any language you might want to learn.

According to Galina Artyushina “ELT podcasts are particularly suited for extensive listening to motivate student interest in listening to the English language and providing them with exposure to native speakers' speech. This activity effectively bridges the gap between the formal English which dominates in most language classrooms and the informal English used in most real-life communication events” [2, p. 30]. The advantages of ELT podcasts are to allow students to access useful listening materials not only at home, but also on the way to university or school. They can easily download recordings at any convenient time. Meanwhile there are disadvantages of podcast. These are: accessibility problems, limiting your audience, distracting etc.

So, do we need to learn both of these skills? My answer is absolutely yes. On the one hand, intensive listening helps you build foundation skills, on the other hand extensive listening focuses on training you to apply these skills to a real-world context. Both skills are essential, so it is significant to do both types of listening skills. You need to know grammar, vocabulary and as well as structure, simultaneously you also need to be able to apply your skills.

Here are the useful websites that can help you boost your listening comprehension:

- 1) ESL video;
- 2) FluentU;
- 3) Infosquares.com;

- 4) 5 Minutes English;
- 5) Easy World of English (EWE);
- 6) British Council Learning;
- 7) LyricsTraining;
- 8) LyricsGaps;
- 9) TED Talks;
- 10) All Ears English;
- 11) Ello;
- 12) ESOL courses;
- 13) BBC Podcasts and so forth.

Most of the students find listening comprehension difficult. The reason can be explained by the following statements: students are not aware of listening strategies; they try to listen word by word; they do not have an idea of listening context; the most important thing I would say is features of connected speech (word stress, sentence stress and speed of speech). Besides that, it is necessary for teachers to motivate students to improve their listening comprehension. Instead teachers make difficult listening comprehension, they should create favourable teaching atmosphere in order to encourage their students on listening skills. The major step to do it correctly is teacher has to choose the correct level of listening comprehension according to his students level of knowledge. Teacher can use different kinds of listening comprehensions depending on their difficulties. It should not be so easy otherwise it will make listening boring and unattractive. So, try to use appropriate listening comprehension that makes your students fun and stimulate their educational activity.

Depending on how a listener listens to his or her opponent there are different types of listeners. According to Rick Warren (2007) there are four types of listeners:

- 1) The judgmental listener – this person already has his mind made up and does not want to be confused by the facts.
- 2) Interrogative listener – this person thinks that good listening consists of continuously firing a series of questions at the person.
- 3) The advice-giving listener – they listen only long enough to make a quick assessment and then they get to what they really want to do.
- 4) Empathetic listener – this person listens to capture the feeling of the speaker, not just the content of word. The empathetic listener pays attention non-verbal signs such as tone, facial expressions, and body language. This involves listening with eyes, not just ears [4, p. 207].

And now I will explain tips and benefits of listening comprehension. Here are the following tips can help you develop your listening comprehension:

1. Join a conversation group – when we think of joining a conversation group we think about speaking. Yes? But do not forget like that we also practice listening comprehension. It is not just about practicing your speaking, but it also about listening to the other people in the group and understanding what they are saying. Like that you can pick up new vocabulary from them, listening to the way to those people speak and etc. So joining a conversation group can be a great way to practice in order to build your own listening skills.
2. Make yourself a study plan and establish a routine – this is a pretty basic tip so you have to do it or you should do it no matter what skills you are working on improving. When you make a plan make sure that this plan will help you to improve your listening skills and use it regularly.
3. Watch movies in the language you are studying, especially on devices which you can use to repeat selected scenes – when you watch movies or audiobook on your computer or phone, if you feel that you do not understand anything so take your time to go back and check new words you could not quite catch them at the beginning. It can be great habit for you.
4. Look for root words when listening to something – this means when you are listening to new words try to think about the base word inside the word that you do not know. Let me mention an example: if you hear the word comparable you might think, what does it mean? Comparable is a word that is made up of the word compare with able added at the end. Able is a suffix that

refers to something we can do. That is why the word comparable means something that we can compare. So when you hear a new word try to think about its root. It might be able to identify the word you hear. And of course this rule does not apply to all words so you have to be careful.

5. Use the shadowing technique – we use this technique for speaking but you can also use it for listening comprehension. It can be great way to find gaps. If you cannot catch the vocabulary or you are not sure about the grammar rule that is used in a sentence you can identify that while you are listening, try to check your textbook or something to identify those parts that you need to work on it a little bit more.
6. Practice listening to dictations – dictation is a fancy word that means a person talking into recording for a long time about one topic. You can find a specific topic that you want but make sure it is in your right language level. For example, you can listen to podcast. There are vast range of podcats on the internet. So, feel free to use them.
7. Watch the gestures of the speaker while you are listening – gesture means the body movements, the body motion or body language of a person. So depending on the country, the culture and speaking style of a person they might have different body language. It can give you hints and information what you should be taken away or the information that you should gather from that topic of conversation. You can also look at someone's face to understand.
8. Focus on the speaker, avoid any internal or external distractions i.e. something that prevents someone from giving their attention to something else [5]. This means when you are listening to something be active, so do not let something inside you, meaning do not think about your work, studies or some personal drama. Try to focus your attention on the speaker. It means be an active listener. Make sure you focus your energy on listening.
9. Listen to a native speaker and try to imitate their intonation and pronunciation – if you listen to native speaker you get a chance to

listen words in a correct way of intonation as well as their pronunciation. You can see in which words intonation goes up and down. You need to listen carefully to all of these things in order to make the same sound for yourself. This can be great way to improve your listening and speaking skills at the same time.

10. Listen to music in your target language and pick out familiar words and phrases – this is really funny way to build up your listening skills. As you listen to the song, you can write down key words or key phrases that sounds unfamiliar to you. Another way you can do is you can look up lyrics of your favorite song and try to read it in a loud voice while you are listening it. Do it as much as possible as long as you understand it.
11. Listen to an audio dialogue without reading the text and write down what you hear–this is a super challenging way for you. Find an interesting audio dialogue and write down what you hear. With the help of this way you can get a chance to find gaps in your vocabulary. So if you realise that you do not know the word that you hear write down it and study on it. It takes some time for sure but it can really help you pin point exactly what you need to focus on.

Benefits of listening are: it enhances your productivity; it can improve relation, understanding, negotiation skills; get a chance to avoid conflicts; helps you to stand out; good listening skills can help your public speaking; it provides feedback (if asked); people will apprehend you as intelligent and perceptive; you will become a better friend and student, and last but not least it also develops patience and tolerance in the listener.

Currently, teachers are teaching online. As a teacher, I am trying to create a good, supportive, enthusiastic and respectful atmosphere in my class. No matter whether you teach online or at university. Try and do your best. Almost students appreciate the teacher that has a good listening skills, patience, strong work ethic, organizational skills, discipline skills, student friendly teaching environment, confidence, good teaching skills (in fact that it does not



matter you are young teacher or professor, you should have proper teaching skills. The reason is they expect clear and understandable explanation from you) and as well as respectful attitude.

In online teaching it is necessary to use the right equipment for our class. Specially in listening lesson teachers need to ensure the students can listen to the videos and audio recordings, as well as listen to the teacher themselves. On Zoom or Teams platform, the teacher can share the computer audio, which will enable the student to listen to the sound as clear as it can be, and of course in order to prevent any problem they need to use earplugs or a headset to muffle the outside noise (if the student does his or her class outside). All the listening tasks can be perfectly conducted online, such as watching a video, listening to a recording, post-listening task and decoding technique (with the help of the chat box or by sharing resources on the screen). Depending on your class the audio can be rewound as many times as needed. I myself use each audio recording twice. But if there is an poor internet connection that is of course not avoidable or the temp of the recording is a bit rapid than we usually listen, in that case I allow my students listen it again. So, as I said there is no specific rule that you can apply. It is up to you. The major thing is, create a well-organised teaching atmosphere and allow your students enjoy the class and learn something new.

#### **Methods and sources of the research.**

The research is based on a description and analysis of different methods of listening comprehension within the field of Second Language Acquisition. The substantial sources of the research were taken from theoretical, practical and methodological investigations into the development of listening comprehension.

**Conclusion.** English is a global language. This is the reason that everyone all around

world wants to learn it. It offers opportunities to find a good job, to explore new cultures and countries, to get to know new people and to make many new friends. English has a vast range of vocabulary; its grammar is full of subtlety; its pronunciation system is difficult and inconsistent, and there are numerous different dialects and innumerable colloquial words. In order to overcome these problems, EFL learners should make English-speaking friends, invest into good study materials, try to listen to and watch English videos as much as possible, make a fixed schedule for themselves, and motivate themselves and rely on their own capabilities. And I would like to add one more thing, namely: once you start to learn a foreign language, you should have a personal goal and know why you want to learn this language. If you have a personal goal, you will never fail.

And part of the process of learning is the ability to listen. So I will conclude my article with a quote from the well-known American financier Bernard M.Baruch: "Most of the successful people I've known are the ones who do more listening than talking".

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## İNGİLİSDİLLİ OLMAYAN ÖLKƏLƏRDƏ İNGİLİS DİLİNİ XARİCİ DİL OLARAQ ÖYRƏNƏN ÖYRƏNCİLƏRDƏ DİNLƏMƏ BACARIQLARININ İNKİŞAF ETDİRİLMƏSİ

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**Annotasiya:** Məqaləyə başlamazdan əvvəl məşhur yazıçı Ernest Heminqvayın bir sitatını paylaşmaq istərdim: “İnsanlar danışanda tamamilə qulaq as. Çox insan heç vaxt qulaq asmır. Məqalədə dinləyib-anlamanın faydaları və öyrənmə yolları, həmçinin dinləyib-anlamanı necə inkişaf etdirməklə bağlı izahlar edəcəyəm. Hər şeydən öncə qeyd edim ki, dinləyib-anlama bacarığı digər insanlar üçün böyük bir təqdir inkişaf etdirməyinizə kömək etməklə yanaşı, dünya haqqında daha çox məlumatı anlamağınıza və hər kəslə daha təsirli ünsiyyət

qurmağınıza yardımçı olur. Bu onunla izah olunur ki, əgər daha təsirli bir şəkildə dinləyirsinizsə, siz danışan zaman qeyd etdiyiniz sözün qarşı tərəfdən düzgün anlama ehtimalı daha çox olur. Bu məqalədə dinləmə bacarıqlarını inkişaf etdirmək istəyən öyrəncilər üçün bəzi praktiki təkliflər işıqlandırılıb.

**Açar sözlər:** *dinləyib-anlama, ingilisdilli olmayan ölkələrdə İngilis dilini xarici dil olaraq öyrənən öyrəncilər (EFL), təcrübə, üsullar, dinləyib-anlamanın üstünlükləri.*

## КАК УЛУЧШИТЬ НАВЫКИ СЛУШАНИЯ И ПОНИМАНИЯ У СТУДЕНТОВ, ИЗУЧАЮЩИХ АНГЛИЙСКИЙ В КАЧЕСТВЕ ИНОСТРАННОГО

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**Аннотация:** Прежде чем начать свою статью, я хотела бы поделиться с вами цитатой известного писателя Эрнеста Хемингуэя. Он сказал: «Когда люди говорят, слушайте до конца. Большинство людей никогда не слушают». В этой статье я расскажу о преимуществах и советах понимания речи на слух, а также о том, как его улучшить. Прежде всего, понимание на слух помогает вам больше ценить других людей, вы лучше понимаете мир, а также более эффективно общаетесь со всеми. Потому что, ес-

ли вы более эффективно слушаете, ваше общение с большей вероятностью попадет в цель когда вы будете говорить. В этой статье выделены некоторые практические советы, которые могут быть полезны тем, кто хочет улучшить свое умение слушать.

**Ключевые слова:** *восприятие речи на слух, изучающие английский язык как иностранный, практика, советы, преимущества понимания речи на слух*