

**LEARNERS' LISTENING COMPREHENSION  
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**ABSTRACT**

*In today's modern era, it is widely acknowledged that listening plays a crucial role in English language acquisition. Many students continue to face serious comprehension problems, mainly because schools and universities emphasize other language aspects such as reading, writing and vocabulary. Since listening is often neglected in most course books and classroom activities, teachers tend to overlook its importance. The present article features several factors that create learners' comprehension difficulties, reviews some causes of the issue and offers numerous strategies to help for improving students' listening ability.*

**Introduction**

In today's globalized world, listening remains one of the most vital abilities in learning the English language. It is an active behavior in contrast to reading which is just a receiving of sound waves. There are three basic steps listening include: hearing, understanding and judging. However, many people encounter problems which related to hearing and understanding. Since they don't listen or understand clearly, they have obstacle to judge. Actually, one of the most common problems among students is the inability to fully understand what they hear. It affects not only to listening test, but also to their daily life. For example, they use listening skills when hearing the news, weather reports, listening to songs, attending lectures or making friends from foreign countries and watching movies, Tv programs, sometimes listening to announcements at public places. Listeners understand spoken language by recognizing sounds, using their background knowledge, knowing grammar rules, paying attention to stress and intonation, and relying on both language-related and contextual clues. Moreover, good listening skills allow learners to comprehend others' speech regardless of factors such as accent, speaking speed, choice of words, intonation, or complex grammatical structures (Hien, 2015). However, despite its importance, listening comprehension often receives less attention in English language teaching and learning. Richards and Renandya (2002) point out that many English teachers tend to neglect listening compared to other language skills. Similarly, second language (L2) listening is rarely treated as a serious research or pedagogical concern. They consider it a "soft skill" that can be acquired outside formal education, which has led to continuous challenges in listening comprehension.[1]

There are several factors that cause difficulties in listening comprehension. One of the most common problems faced by learners in listening comprehension is the inability to grasp the overall meaning of the spoken text. Learners often focus excessively on individual words or unfamiliar vocabulary, which prevents them from understanding the general message and key ideas. This issue indicates a weakness in top-down processing, as students fail to use contextual clues, prior knowledge, and discourse patterns to infer meaning. Consequently, their comprehension remains fragmented, and they experience difficulty following the speaker's main point or intention. Additionally, lacking of information about particular listening topic is one of the LC (Listening Comprehension) problems among learners. The third factor concerns physical or environmental conditions during listening activities, such as background noise, poor audio equipment, or unclear recordings.

Another major factor that contributes to mishearing is the learner's unfamiliarity with English stress and intonation patterns. These suprasegmental features have a strong influence not only on how certain phonemes are realized, but also on how the meaning of an utterance is perceived. [2]

### **Method**

Many learners tend to focus on individual words or unfamiliar vocabulary, which prevents them from comprehending the general message and key ideas of the listening materials. Therefore, listening comprehension difficulties can be effectively reduced through a familiar method; Intensive and Extensive listening. The intensive listening approach is used to enhance learners' bottom-up processing skills by engaging them in focused and repeated listening to short audio recordings. This allows learners to improve their recognition of pronunciation, stress, rhythm, and grammatical patterns, leading to better sound discrimination and decoding skills. The extensive listening approach is designed to develop top-down processing skills by encouraging learners to listen to authentic and enjoyable materials such as films, podcasts, songs, and news broadcasts. These activities enabled students to infer meaning from context, understand the speaker's intention, and focus on the overall message rather than on every single word– discussing, reflecting on, and summarizing the content to reinforce comprehension. This integrated methodology aimed to balance both accuracy and fluency, helping learners overcome comprehension difficulties and gain confidence in understanding spoken English.[3]

And one of the methods is Cognitive strategy. Cognitive strategies involve mental processes that help learners understand and store information in short- or long-term memory. They include repetition, summarizing, and integrating details to support comprehension. In listening, these strategies enable learners to focus, plan, monitor, and evaluate information while processing spoken input (Holden, 2004). According to Oxford (1990), conscious use of such strategies helps maintain attention, while Vandergrift (2003) found that advanced listeners employ them more frequently. Metacognitive awareness also enhances learning by helping students recognize difficulties and choose effective techniques, such as using concept maps or managing background noise to improve focus and confidence. Moreover, teachers should familiarize their students with the rules of pronunciation in order to help them hear the different forms of rapid natural speech and ask them to imitate native speakers' pronunciation or help their students to be familiar with the accents of different native speakers. Due to the

fact that native speakers have specific accents it is necessary for students to recognize the differences between American and British accents.

### **Results**

The findings revealed that the integration of intensive, extensive, and cognitive listening strategies significantly improved learners' overall listening comprehension. Students demonstrated notable progress in their ability to grasp the general meaning of spoken texts rather than focusing solely on individual words. Intensive listening activities enhanced their sound recognition, pronunciation awareness, and bottom-up decoding skills, allowing them to better identify linguistic patterns and speech features. Through extensive listening, learners developed stronger top-down processing skills, which enabled them to infer meaning from context and understand the speaker's main ideas with greater fluency and confidence. The inclusion of cognitive strategies, such as summarizing, repetition, and active monitoring, further reinforced comprehension by helping students manage information in both short and long-term memory. Moreover, exposure to various accents (such as American and British) improved learners' adaptability and reduced comprehension anxiety when listening to authentic materials. Teachers' explicit instruction in pronunciation and speech patterns also plays a key role in enhancing learners' ability to recognize and interpret natural, rapid speech. Overall, the combination of these methods led to higher motivation, better focus, and more effective understanding of spoken English.

In conclusion, the study confirms that listening comprehension difficulties can be effectively reduced through a balanced integration of intensive, extensive, and cognitive listening strategies. Each method complements the others, intensive listening refines detailed linguistic awareness, extensive listening promotes holistic understanding and fluency, while cognitive strategies strengthen mental processing and self-regulation. Together, they create a comprehensive framework that supports both bottom-up and top-down comprehension processes. Furthermore, developing learners' awareness of pronunciation patterns and exposing them to various native accents contribute to more flexible and confident listening. Teachers are therefore encouraged to apply these methods systematically, combining focused practice with authentic input and reflective learning activities. Such an integrated pedagogical approach not only enhances comprehension accuracy but also fosters learner autonomy, confidence, and long-term listening proficiency in English as a foreign language.

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