

LINGUISTIC, COGNITIVE, AND METHODOLOGICAL PROBLEMS AFFECTING LISTENING COMPREHENSION

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Abstract. This article examines the linguistic, cognitive, and methodological problems that affect listening comprehension in English language learning. Listening comprehension is considered one of the most complex receptive skills because it requires the simultaneous processing of phonological, lexical, grammatical, semantic, pragmatic, and contextual information. The study discusses listening comprehension not only as the passive reception of sound but also as an active cognitive process involving perception, parsing, interpretation, prediction, memory, attention, and metacognitive control. The article analyzes major linguistic barriers such as speech rate, connected speech, reduced forms, unfamiliar vocabulary, accent variation, intonation, and discourse structure. It also explores cognitive difficulties related to working memory, attention distribution, anxiety, lack of background knowledge, and limited use of listening strategies. Methodological problems, including insufficient pre-listening preparation, overreliance on testing rather than teaching listening, lack of authentic materials, and ineffective feedback, are also examined. The article concludes that listening comprehension can be improved through systematic strategy instruction, metacognitive awareness, authentic input, staged listening tasks, and learner-centered teaching approaches.

Keywords: listening comprehension, linguistic problems, cognitive processing, methodology, English language teaching, metacognition, listening strategies, EFL learners.

Annotatsiya. Mazkur maqolada ingliz tilini o'rganish jarayonida tinglab tushunishga ta'sir etuvchi lingvistik, kognitiv va metodik muammolar tahlil qilinadi. Tinglab tushunish murakkab retseptiv ko'nikma bo'lib, u fonologik, leksik, grammatik, semantik, pragmatik va kontekstual axborotni bir vaqtning o'zida qayta ishlashni talab qiladi. Tadqiqotda tinglab tushunish passiv eshitish jarayoni emas, balki idrok qilish, segmentlash, ma'noni anglash, taxmin qilish, xotira, diqqat va metakognitiv nazorat bilan bog'liq faol kognitiv jarayon sifatida talqin etiladi. Maqolada nutq tezligi, bog'langan nutq, qisqargan shakllar, notanish lug'at, aksentlar, intonatsiya va diskurs tuzilishi kabi lingvistik to'siqlar yoritiladi. Shuningdek, ishchi xotira, diqqatni taqsimlash, xavotir, fon bilimlar yetishmasligi va strategiyalardan yetarli foydalanmaslik kabi kognitiv muammolar ham tahlil qilinadi. Metodik jihatdan esa tinglashni o'rgatish o'rniga uni faqat test qilish, autentik materiallardan kam foydalanish, pre-listening bosqichining sust tashkil etilishi va samarali feedback yetishmasligi muhim muammolar sifatida ko'rsatiladi.

Kalit so'zlar: tinglab tushunish, lingvistik muammolar, kognitiv jarayon, metodika, ingliz tilini o'qitish, metakognitsiya, tinglash strategiyalari, EFL o'rganuvchilar.

Аннотация. В данной статье анализируются лингвистические, когнитивные и методические проблемы, влияющие на понимание английской речи на слух. Аудирование рассматривается как одна из наиболее сложных рецептивных речевых умений, поскольку оно требует одновременной обработки фонологической, лексической, грамматической, семантической, прагматической и контекстуальной информации. В статье аудирование трактуется не как пассивное восприятие звукового потока, а как активный когнитивный процесс, включающий восприятие, синтаксическую обработку, интерпретацию, прогнозирование, память, внимание и метакогнитивный контроль. Рассматриваются такие лингвистические трудности, как темп речи, связная речь, редуцированные формы, незнакомая лексика, акцентные различия, интонация и структура дискурса. Также анализируются когнитивные проблемы, связанные с рабочей памятью, распределением внимания, тревожностью, недостаточностью фоновых знаний и ограниченным использованием стратегий аудирования. Методические проблемы включают недостаточную подготовку к аудированию, преобладание тестирования над обучением аудированию, нехватку аутентичных материалов и неэффективную обратную связь.

Ключевые слова: аудирование, понимание речи на слух, лингвистические трудности, когнитивная обработка, методика, обучение английскому языку, метакогниция, стратегии аудирования.

Introduction. Listening comprehension is one of the central skills in foreign language learning. In the process of learning English, learners receive a large amount of information through listening: classroom instructions, audio materials, conversations, lectures, interviews, films, podcasts, and real-life interactions. However, listening is often perceived by learners as one of the most difficult skills because it happens in real time and does not allow the listener to stop the speaker, return to the previous sentence, or analyze every word slowly. Unlike reading, where the learner can reread a sentence, listening requires immediate processing of sound, vocabulary, grammar, meaning, and context.

In language pedagogy, listening was traditionally considered a passive receptive skill. However, modern applied linguistics views listening as an active and complex cognitive activity. Rost states that listening involves not only hearing sounds but also constructing meaning through linguistic knowledge, contextual information, inference, and interaction [1]. Buck also emphasizes that listening comprehension is the result of interaction between linguistic and non-linguistic sources of information, including acoustic input, vocabulary, syntax, discourse, context, and background knowledge [2]. Therefore, listening comprehension should be studied as a multidimensional process.

The difficulty of listening comprehension is especially noticeable among EFL learners, that is, learners who study English in a foreign language environment. Such learners often have limited exposure to natural spoken English. They may understand written texts relatively well, but they may fail to recognize the same words in fast speech. This happens because spoken language differs from written language in many ways: it includes reduced forms, contractions, weak forms, pauses, hesitation markers, incomplete sentences, overlapping speech, intonation patterns, and accents. Field notes that learners frequently fail not because they do not know the words, but because they cannot decode the stream of speech quickly enough [3].

Listening comprehension is also closely connected with cognitive processing. According to Goh, many listening problems arise during the stages of perception, parsing, and utilization [4]. At the perception stage, learners may fail to recognize sounds or word boundaries. At the parsing stage, they may not connect words into meaningful grammatical structures. At the utilization stage, they may fail to integrate the message with prior knowledge or infer the speaker's intention. This shows that listening problems are not limited to vocabulary or pronunciation; they also include memory, attention, prediction, interpretation, and strategic control.

From a methodological perspective, listening is sometimes not taught systematically. In many classrooms, teachers play an audio recording and ask students to answer comprehension questions. If students answer incorrectly, the teacher may simply

replay the recording or give the correct answer. Such practice tests listening but does not necessarily teach learners how to listen. Vandergrift and Goh argue that listening instruction should include metacognitive awareness, planning, monitoring, problem-solving, and evaluation [5]. In other words, learners need to understand not only what they hear, but also how they listen.

The relevance of the present topic lies in the fact that listening comprehension is affected by several interconnected factors: linguistic, cognitive, affective, methodological, and sociocultural. If these factors are studied separately, the nature of listening difficulties may remain incomplete. Therefore, this article aims to analyze linguistic, cognitive, and methodological problems affecting listening comprehension and to suggest pedagogically appropriate ways of addressing them in English language teaching.

Literature analysis. Research on listening comprehension has developed significantly within applied linguistics, psycholinguistics, and language teaching methodology. Early approaches often treated listening as a receptive skill that developed naturally through exposure. Later studies showed that listening requires explicit instruction, strategic training, and cognitive support.

Rubin's review of second language listening research is one of the important works in this field. Rubin identifies several factors influencing listening comprehension, including text characteristics, interlocutor characteristics, task characteristics, listener characteristics, and process characteristics [6]. This classification is important because it shows that listening failure cannot be explained by one factor only. The problem may be in the audio text, speaker, task design, listener's proficiency, background knowledge, or cognitive strategy use.

Buck's work on assessing listening provides a detailed explanation of the listening process and its relation to testing. According to Buck, listening comprehension depends on different kinds of knowledge: linguistic knowledge, pragmatic knowledge, discourse knowledge, and world knowledge [2]. This view is significant for methodology because it shows that listening tests and listening tasks should not only check whether learners heard certain words, but also whether they understood the speaker's intention, context, and meaning.

Field's *Listening in the Language Classroom* changed the way listening pedagogy is discussed. Field criticizes the traditional comprehension-question model and argues that teachers should pay more attention to the processes involved in listening [3]. He distinguishes between product-oriented listening and process-oriented listening. Product-oriented listening checks the final answer, while process-oriented listening helps learners understand where comprehension breaks down. This approach is useful because it allows teachers to identify whether learners failed because of sound recognition, word segmentation, grammar, vocabulary, memory, or inference.

Goh's cognitive perspective on listening comprehension problems is also central to this field. She identifies real-time difficulties experienced by second language listeners and analyzes them through Anderson's three-phase model: perception, parsing, and utilization [4], [7]. Goh's work is valuable because it demonstrates that learners may experience different types of problems at different stages of comprehension. For example, a learner may hear sounds but fail to recognize words; recognize words but fail to understand sentence structure; or understand individual sentences but fail to construct the overall meaning.

Vandergrift has contributed significantly to metacognitive approaches to listening. He argues that successful listeners use planning, monitoring, evaluation, and problem-solving strategies more effectively than less successful listeners [8]. Vandergrift and Goh later developed a pedagogical framework for teaching second language listening through metacognition [5]. This framework emphasizes that learners should be trained to predict content, monitor comprehension, verify hypotheses, identify problems, and evaluate their listening performance.

Flowerdew and Miller's work on second language listening connects theory with classroom practice. They discuss academic listening, authentic materials, lecture comprehension, and the importance of sociocultural context [9]. Their approach is particularly important for learners who need English for academic purposes, because academic listening involves not only understanding words but also following argument structure, recognizing discourse markers, identifying main ideas, and taking notes.

Nation and Newton propose a balanced approach to teaching listening and speaking. Their framework includes meaning-focused input, language-focused learning, meaning-focused output, and fluency development [10]. This is methodologically important because listening development requires both exposure to meaningful input and focused attention to language features such as pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, and discourse signals.

Hasan's study on learners' perceptions of listening comprehension problems shows that learners often feel difficulty when listening to natural English at normal speed [11]. This supports the idea that learners' subjective perception of difficulty is an important part of listening instruction. Teachers should not only provide audio materials, but also help learners become aware of the sources of their difficulties.

O'Malley, Chamot, and Kupper investigated listening comprehension strategies in second language acquisition and showed that effective listeners use more purposeful strategies than ineffective listeners [12]. Their findings support the importance of strategy instruction in listening pedagogy. Listening strategies such as prediction, selective attention, inferencing, note-taking, monitoring, and evaluation can help learners manage real-time comprehension more successfully.

Thus, the literature demonstrates that listening comprehension is a complex process influenced by linguistic input, cognitive processing, learner strategies, task design,

teaching methods, and affective factors. This article builds on these theoretical foundations and groups listening problems into three major categories: linguistic, cognitive, and methodological.

Research methodology. This article is based on a theoretical-analytical research design. It does not present experimental data or statistical results. Instead, it synthesizes major findings from applied linguistics and English language teaching research on listening comprehension. The analysis focuses on three interconnected dimensions: linguistic problems, cognitive problems, and methodological problems.

The first dimension, linguistic problems, includes difficulties related to the nature of spoken English. These include pronunciation, speech rate, connected speech, weak forms, contractions, stress, intonation, vocabulary, grammar, discourse markers, accents, and pragmatic meaning. These problems are analyzed because they directly affect learners' ability to decode and interpret spoken language.

The second dimension, cognitive problems, refers to mental processes involved in listening. These include perception, parsing, utilization, working memory, attention, prediction, inference, background knowledge, anxiety, and metacognitive control. This part of the analysis relies particularly on cognitive models of listening and metacognitive approaches developed by Goh, Vandergrift, and other scholars [8].

The third dimension, methodological problems, concerns classroom teaching practices. These include insufficient pre-listening preparation, overuse of testing, lack of strategy instruction, limited exposure to authentic speech, inappropriate task design, lack of feedback, and insufficient integration of listening with speaking, vocabulary, and pronunciation teaching.

The examples used in this article are illustrative and pedagogical. They are not presented as results of a separate corpus or classroom experiment. This is important in order to avoid unsupported claims. The purpose of the article is to provide a scientifically grounded discussion of listening comprehension problems and suggest practical implications for English language teaching.

Results and discussion.

1. The nature of listening comprehension. Listening comprehension is not a simple process of hearing sounds. It is a dynamic process in which the listener receives acoustic signals, identifies sounds, recognizes words, understands grammatical structures, interprets meaning, relates information to context, and responds appropriately. This process happens very quickly and often under pressure. Therefore, even learners who know grammar and vocabulary may experience difficulty when listening to natural spoken English.

Listening involves both bottom-up and top-down processing. Bottom-up processing starts from sounds and moves toward meaning. The listener identifies phonemes, syllables, words, phrases, and sentences. Top-down processing starts from background knowledge,

context, prediction, and expectation. The listener uses prior knowledge to guess meaning and fill gaps. Effective listening requires the cooperation of both processes [3].

For example, when a learner hears the sentence “**Did you wanna go out later?**”, bottom-up processing helps them recognize the sounds and words. However, because “**want to**” is reduced to “**wanna**”, the learner may fail to identify the phrase. Top-down processing may help if the learner understands the situation and predicts that the speaker is making an invitation. Thus, successful listening depends on both linguistic decoding and contextual interpretation.

2. Linguistic problems affecting listening comprehension. Linguistic problems are among the most visible barriers to listening comprehension. These problems are connected with the structure and use of spoken English. Unlike written language, spoken language is fast, variable, reduced, and often grammatically incomplete. Learners who are trained mainly through written texts may find natural speech difficult to understand.

2.1. Speech rate. One of the most common problems in listening comprehension is speech rate. Learners often complain that native or fluent speakers speak “too fast”. In reality, the problem is not always the objective speed of speech, but the learner’s limited ability to process speech in real time. When speech is fast, learners have less time to recognize words, connect them grammatically, and construct meaning.

Fast speech also increases the burden on working memory. If learners cannot understand the first part of a sentence quickly, they may lose the following information. For example, in a sentence such as “Although the project was initially delayed, the team managed to complete it before the deadline,” the learner must hold the first clause in memory while processing the second clause. If processing is slow, comprehension may fail.

2.2. Connected speech. Connected speech is another major linguistic difficulty. In natural English, words are not pronounced separately. They are linked, reduced, assimilated, or elided. For example:

Written form	Spoken form	Possible learner difficulty
want to	wanna	Learner may not recognize the phrase
going to	gonna	Reduced future form may be missed
did you	didja / dʒə	Word boundary becomes unclear
next day	nex day	/t/ may disappear
an apple	ə napple	Linking changes word boundary

Learners who expect every word to be pronounced clearly may fail to understand connected speech. Field emphasizes that decoding problems at the sound level can seriously affect comprehension [3]. Therefore, listening instruction should include explicit work on weak forms, linking, assimilation, elision, and rhythm.

2.3. Reduced forms and contractions. English speech contains many reduced forms: **I’m, you’re, he’s, don’t, can’t, shouldn’t, could’ve, must’ve** and others. In fast speech, these forms may be difficult for learners to recognize. For instance, “**I would have**

told you” may sound like **“I’d’ve told you.”** If learners are familiar only with the written form, they may not connect the spoken form with the grammar they know.

Reduced forms are not only pronunciation issues; they are also connected with grammar and meaning. If learners do not recognize **“should’ve”**, they may miss the modal meaning of regret or recommendation. Thus, pronunciation, grammar, and meaning interact in listening comprehension.

2.4. Vocabulary limitations. Vocabulary knowledge plays a central role in listening. If learners do not know enough words, they cannot understand the message. However, listening vocabulary is different from reading vocabulary. A learner may recognize a word in written form but fail to recognize it in speech because of pronunciation, stress, or reduction.

For example, the word **comfortable** may be pronounced as /'kʌmfətəbl/ rather than as a slow syllable-by-syllable form. Similarly, **vegetable, interesting, probably, and different** may be pronounced in reduced ways. Learners who know these words in writing may still fail to identify them in speech.

Vocabulary difficulty also includes idioms, phrasal verbs, collocations, and discourse markers. Expressions such as **“hang on,” “figure out,” “by the way,” “you know,” “I mean,” “sort of”** may confuse learners if they try to translate each word literally.

2.5. Accent and pronunciation variation. English is used globally, and learners encounter different accents: British, American, Australian, Indian, African, and many others. Even within one variety, speakers differ in pronunciation, intonation, and rhythm. Learners who are exposed only to one standard accent may struggle when they hear another accent.

Accent variation affects vowel quality, consonant pronunciation, stress patterns, and rhythm. For example, the pronunciation of **“water,” “better,” “schedule,” “either,” “tomato”** may vary across English varieties. This does not mean that one accent is more correct than another; rather, learners need exposure to diverse spoken English.

2.6. Intonation and stress. Intonation carries meaning in spoken language. It can signal surprise, doubt, politeness, contrast, emphasis, or irony. Learners who focus only on words may miss the speaker’s attitude. For example, the sentence **“That’s great”** can express real admiration, mild approval, or sarcasm depending on intonation.

Stress also affects meaning. In English, sentence stress can change the focus:

- *I didn’t say he stole the money.*
- *I didn’t say he stole the money.*
- *I didn’t say he stole the money.*

Each version emphasizes different information. If learners do not notice stress, they may misunderstand the speaker’s intention.

2.7. Discourse structure. Listening comprehension also depends on understanding discourse organization. In lectures, presentations, interviews, and stories, speakers use discourse markers to organize information:

- **first of all**
- **however**
- **on the other hand**
- **as a result**
- **for example**
- **in conclusion**

If learners fail to recognize these markers, they may not follow the structure of the message. Flowerdew and Miller emphasize the importance of discourse-level listening, especially in academic contexts [9]. Understanding individual words is not enough; learners must identify main ideas, supporting details, transitions, examples, and conclusions.

3. Cognitive problems affecting listening comprehension

Cognitive problems are internal mental difficulties that occur during listening. They are often invisible but very important. A learner may know vocabulary and grammar, but still fail to understand because of limited memory, weak attention, anxiety, or ineffective strategies.

3.1. Perception problems. At the perception stage, learners try to identify sounds and words in the speech stream. Goh shows that many learners experience difficulty at this stage, especially when they cannot recognize familiar words in connected speech [4]. This problem may occur because learners have learned words visually rather than aurally.

For example, a learner may know the written word “**actually**”, but may not recognize it when pronounced quickly as /'ækʃəli/ or /'ækʃli/. The same applies to “**probably**,” “**because**,” “**comfortable**,” “**interesting**” and many other words.

3.2. Parsing problems. Parsing means organizing words into grammatical structures. Learners may recognize individual words but fail to understand how they relate to each other. Complex sentences, relative clauses, passive constructions, and embedded phrases can create difficulty.

For example:

“The book that the teacher recommended last week has already been borrowed.”

A learner may understand the words **book**, **teacher**, **recommended**, **borrowed**, but may fail to identify the main structure: **The book has already been borrowed.**

Such problems show that listening comprehension requires grammar processing in real time. Unlike reading, learners cannot pause and analyze the sentence slowly.

3.3. Utilization problems. Utilization refers to connecting the message with context, background knowledge, and speaker intention [4], [7]. Learners may understand words and grammar but fail to understand the implied meaning. For example:

“It’s getting late.”

Depending on context, this may mean:

- We should go home.
- Please finish your work.
- I am tired.
- The meeting should end.

If learners understand only the literal meaning, they may miss the pragmatic function. Listening comprehension therefore requires pragmatic awareness and contextual interpretation.

3.4. Working memory limitations. Working memory is crucial in listening because the listener must temporarily store information while processing new input. If the speech is long, dense, or fast, working memory may become overloaded. This is especially problematic for lower-level learners because they spend much mental energy decoding words and have less capacity left for meaning.

For example, in lectures or long listening passages, learners may understand the beginning but forget it by the time they reach the end. This leads to incomplete comprehension. Note-taking, chunking, and recognizing discourse markers can reduce memory load.

3.5. Attention and concentration. Listening requires sustained attention. If learners lose concentration for a few seconds, they may miss important information. This is especially difficult in long listening tasks, monotonous lectures, noisy environments, or unfamiliar topics.

Attention is also selective. Learners must decide what to focus on: key words, main ideas, details, speaker attitude, or task requirements. If they try to understand every word, they may become tired and lose the main meaning. Strategy instruction can help learners focus on relevant information.

3.6. Anxiety and emotional barriers. Affective factors influence listening comprehension. Many learners feel anxious when they cannot understand fast speech. This anxiety can reduce concentration and confidence. Hasan notes that learners’ perceptions of listening difficulties can affect their comprehension and strategy use [11].

Anxiety creates a negative cycle: the learner fails to understand, becomes nervous, loses attention, and understands even less. Teachers should therefore create a supportive listening environment where learners understand that partial comprehension is natural and that listening improves gradually.

3.7. Lack of background knowledge. Background knowledge helps learners predict meaning. If learners know the topic, they can guess unknown words and infer meaning. If the topic is unfamiliar, comprehension becomes more difficult.

For example, listening to a text about **climate change**, **financial markets**, or **medical procedures** requires topic knowledge. Even native speakers may struggle with

unfamiliar technical topics. Therefore, pre-listening activities should activate background knowledge and introduce key concepts.

3.8. Limited metacognitive awareness. Metacognition means awareness and control of one's own learning process. In listening, metacognitive learners plan before listening, monitor during listening, and evaluate after listening [5], [8]. Less successful listeners may simply listen passively and give up when they miss words.

Metacognitive strategy training helps learners ask themselves:

- What do I already know about this topic?
- What information should I listen for?
- Which words are essential?
- Did I understand the main idea?
- Where did I lose comprehension?
- What can I do differently next time?

Such questions turn listening into an active learning process.

4. Methodological problems affecting listening comprehension. Methodological problems arise from the way listening is taught in the classroom. Even if learners are motivated, poor methodology can limit their progress.

4.1. Testing listening instead of teaching listening. One of the most common methodological problems is that listening lessons often become tests. The teacher plays an audio recording, students answer questions, and then the teacher checks answers. This approach measures comprehension but does not teach learners how to improve.

Field criticizes this product-oriented approach and argues for process-oriented listening instruction [3]. Teachers should help learners identify why they failed: Did they miss a sound? Did they misunderstand a word? Did they lose concentration? Did they fail to infer meaning? Without such diagnosis, learners may repeat the same mistakes.

4.2. Insufficient pre-listening activities. Pre-listening activities prepare learners for the topic, vocabulary, context, and purpose of listening. If teachers skip this stage, learners may face the audio text without any support. This increases anxiety and reduces comprehension.

Effective pre-listening may include:

- discussing the topic;
- predicting content from title or picture;
- teaching key vocabulary;
- introducing the situation;
- setting a clear listening purpose;
- activating background knowledge.

However, pre-listening should not explain everything. It should prepare learners to listen actively, not remove all challenge.

4.3. Inappropriate listening materials. Materials that are too easy do not develop listening ability; materials that are too difficult discourage learners. Teachers should select materials according to learners' level, purpose, and needs. Authentic materials are useful, but they should be introduced gradually.

Authentic listening materials include interviews, podcasts, news reports, conversations, lectures, announcements, and videos. They expose learners to natural speech, but they may contain fast speech, accent variation, background noise, and idiomatic expressions. Therefore, teachers should scaffold authentic materials with appropriate tasks.

4.4. Lack of strategy instruction. Many learners do not know how to listen strategically. They may try to understand every word and become frustrated when they miss something. Teachers should explicitly teach strategies such as prediction, selective listening, inferencing, recognizing key words, using context, note-taking, and monitoring comprehension.

O'Malley, Chamot, and Kupper show that effective listeners use strategies more successfully than ineffective listeners [12]. Therefore, strategy instruction should be part of listening methodology, not an optional extra.

4.5. Overemphasis on multiple-choice tasks. Multiple-choice tasks are common in listening tests, but they do not always reflect real-life listening. If used too often, they may train learners to search for test answers rather than understand meaning. Listening tasks should be varied:

- listening for gist;
- listening for specific information;
- listening for details;
- listening for attitude;
- listening and note-taking;
- listening and summarizing;
- listening and responding;
- listening and discussing.

A variety of tasks helps learners develop different listening subskills.

4.6. Lack of feedback. Feedback is essential in listening instruction. Simply saying "correct" or "incorrect" is not enough. Learners need to know why they misunderstood. Feedback may focus on pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, inference, attention, or strategy use.

For example, if a learner chooses the wrong answer because they misheard "can't" as "can", the teacher should explain the role of stress and vowel reduction. If the learner misses the main idea because they focus on details, the teacher should teach gist listening.

4.7. Neglect of pronunciation in listening lessons. Pronunciation is often taught for speaking, but it is equally important for listening. Learners need to recognize sounds,

stress, rhythm, intonation, weak forms, and connected speech. Without receptive pronunciation training, learners may know a word but fail to recognize it in natural speech.

Listening and pronunciation should therefore be integrated. Activities such as dictation, shadowing, phonemic awareness, stress marking, and connected speech practice can improve listening recognition.

5. Classification of listening comprehension problems. The following table summarizes the major linguistic, cognitive, and methodological problems affecting listening comprehension.

Type of problem	Main difficulty	Examples	Possible solution
Linguistic	Fast and connected speech	wanna, gonna, didja	Teach weak forms and linking
Linguistic	Unknown vocabulary	idioms, phrasal verbs	Pre-teach key vocabulary
Linguistic	Accent variation	British, American, regional accents	Use varied audio input
Linguistic	Intonation and stress	sarcasm, emphasis	Teach intonation patterns
Cognitive	Working memory overload	long sentences, dense lectures	Use note-taking and chunking
Cognitive	Lack of attention	long audio, noise	Set clear listening purpose
Cognitive	Anxiety	fear of missing words	Supportive classroom atmosphere
Cognitive	Weak metacognition	passive listening	Plan-monitor-evaluate cycle
Methodological	Testing instead of teaching	only comprehension questions	Process-based listening
Methodological	Lack of authentic input	artificial textbook audio	Gradual authentic materials
Methodological	Poor feedback	only correct answers	Diagnostic feedback
Methodological	No strategy instruction	learners try to hear every word	Teach listening strategies

This classification shows that listening comprehension problems are interconnected. For example, fast speech is a linguistic problem, but it also creates cognitive overload. Lack of pre-listening support is a methodological problem, but it increases anxiety and reduces comprehension. Therefore, listening instruction should address all three dimensions together.

6. Pedagogical implications

Improving listening comprehension requires systematic and learner-centered methodology. The following pedagogical principles can be proposed.

First, listening should be taught as a process. Teachers should not only check answers but also help learners understand how they listened, where they failed, and what strategies they can use next time [5].

Second, listening instruction should include both bottom-up and top-down activities. Bottom-up activities help learners recognize sounds, words, stress, and grammar. Top-down activities help learners use context, prediction, and background knowledge.

Third, teachers should use pre-listening, while-listening, and post-listening stages. Pre-listening prepares learners; while-listening guides comprehension; post-listening consolidates learning through discussion, reflection, vocabulary work, and speaking tasks.

Fourth, learners should be exposed to authentic and semi-authentic materials. Authentic input helps learners become familiar with real speech, but it should be selected carefully according to level and purpose.

Fifth, strategy instruction should be explicit. Learners should be taught how to predict, infer, monitor, take notes, identify key words, ignore unnecessary details, and evaluate their performance.

Sixth, feedback should be diagnostic. Teachers should explain whether the problem was caused by pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, memory, attention, or misunderstanding of context.

Seventh, listening should be integrated with speaking, vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation. For example, after listening to a dialogue, learners may practice useful expressions, discuss the topic, analyze pronunciation features, and produce their own dialogue.

Conclusion. Listening comprehension is one of the most important and complex skills in English language learning. It requires the simultaneous processing of sounds, words, grammar, meaning, context, speaker intention, and background knowledge. The difficulties learners experience in listening are not caused by one factor only. They result from the interaction of linguistic, cognitive, and methodological problems.

Linguistic problems include speech rate, connected speech, reduced forms, unfamiliar vocabulary, accent variation, intonation, stress, and discourse structure. These problems make it difficult for learners to decode spoken English and recognize words in real time. Cognitive problems include perception, parsing, utilization, working memory limitations, attention problems, anxiety, lack of background knowledge, and weak metacognitive awareness. These factors influence how learners process, store, and interpret spoken information. Methodological problems include testing listening instead of teaching it, insufficient pre-listening preparation, lack of authentic materials, limited strategy instruction, overuse of multiple-choice tasks, weak feedback, and neglect of pronunciation in listening lessons.

The analysis shows that effective listening instruction should be systematic, process-oriented, and strategy-based. Teachers should help learners develop both bottom-up and top-down processing skills. They should also provide metacognitive training, authentic input, staged listening tasks, and diagnostic feedback. Listening should not be treated as a passive skill or a simple test activity. It should be taught as an active cognitive and communicative process.

Thus, the topic “**Linguistic, cognitive, and methodological problems affecting listening comprehension**” is highly relevant for English language teaching. It provides a

scientific basis for improving listening pedagogy, designing better classroom tasks, supporting EFL learners, and developing more effective listening strategies.

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