



## ASSESSING LANGUAGE SKILLS: LISTENING COMPREHENSION

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**Abstract:** *This article examines the significance of listening comprehension in language teaching, its assessment criteria, and its role in international examinations such as CEFR, IELTS, and TOEFL. It also presents the views of Uzbek scholars, practical recommendations, and methodological guidelines related to listening comprehension.*

**Keywords:** *listening comprehension, assessment, IELTS, TOEFL, CEFR, learner competence.*

### **Introduction:**

Listening comprehension is extremely important in language learning. As the President of Uzbekistan, Shavkat Mirziyoyev, emphasized: “*Our youth should master foreign languages deeply, but first of all, they must respect their mother tongue*” (president.uz). From this perspective, assessing listening comprehension in the language-teaching process is significant both theoretically and practically.

When I was at school, English was taught from the 5th grade, but teachers mostly focused on simple grammar and basic vocabulary through brief explanations and English songs. As a result, we completed school with limited practical skills. When I later chose the field of English, I required additional lessons. My tutors taught me grammar, listening, reading, and writing, and I experienced many difficulties. Today, thanks to the initiative of our esteemed President, English lessons are taught from the very first year students enter school. Furthermore, textbooks now include listening, reading, writing, and speaking units.

According to Uzbek scholars M. Tukhtasinov and N. Rahmonov, listening comprehension is the natural initial stage of language acquisition. Similarly, H. D.



Brown (Teaching Listening and Speaking, 2001) states that listening comprehension serves as a foundation for receiving and producing speech.

## 1. Theoretical foundations of listening comprehension

Listening comprehension is the process of perceiving spoken language, processing it, and understanding its meaning. According to Uzbek scholar A. Kodirov, listening comprehension takes place in three stages:

1. Identification — recognizing sounds and distinguishing stress;
2. Incorporation — linking heard words and understanding the content;
3. Interpretation — identifying key information and drawing conclusions.

Kodirov further states: “A learner does not need to understand every word; it is enough to identify the signals that convey the main idea.” I also used to struggle with this and often made mistakes or left gaps because I failed to focus on the main idea. To avoid such difficulties, a learner must work harder, be attentive, and master the pronunciation of the target language, as misunderstanding pronunciation can also cause many errors in listening tasks.

## 2. Key factors in listening comprehension

According to Uzbek methodologist R. Mamarasulov, the following factors are crucial in listening comprehension:

- speed and intonation of speech;
- familiarity with vocabulary;
- accent and pronunciation differences;
- the influence of background noise;
- the learner’s prior knowledge;
- the length of the listening material.

## 3. Stages of assessing listening comprehension.

### 3.1. Pre-listening.

Learners prepare for the audio topic through pictures, questions, or brief discussions that provide context.

### 3.2. While-listening.



Learners listen to the audio and identify the main idea, supporting details, facts, and logical connections between ideas.

### 3.3. Post-listening.

Analysis, retelling, and discussions reinforce listening comprehension skills.

## 4. Listening comprehension in international examinations.

### 4.1. IELTS Listening.

- 30 minutes, 4 sections;
- dialogues and monologues;
- everyday and academic topics;
- gap-fill, matching, diagrams, short-answer questions.

### 4.2. TOEFL Listening.

- 36–56 minutes;
- lectures, discussions, and campus conversations;
- mostly multiple-choice questions;
- audio passages are longer and more academic than in IELTS.

### 4.3. CEFR requirements.

A2: understanding simple announcements and conversations;

B1: understanding the sequence of basic events;

B2: comprehending fact-based and detailed speech;

C1/C2: understanding complex, fast-paced academic lectures.

### **Conclusion:**

Listening comprehension is an essential component of language learning. According to Uzbek scholars, assessment should focus not on vocabulary size but on meaningful comprehension and the ability to identify key signals in speech. President Shavkat Mirziyoyev emphasizes that thorough language learning and practical application enhance the knowledge level of young people. This means that every language learner must work continuously to improve. Foreign literature (Brown, 2001) likewise confirms the practical importance of listening comprehension skills.



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