



## **THE ROLE AND IMPORTANCE OF LISTENING COMPREHENSION IN TEACHING ENGLISH IN HIGHER EDUCATION**

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### **Abstract**

This article theoretically analyses the role and importance of listening comprehension skills in teaching English in higher education. The article highlights the role of listening comprehension as an essential component of communicative competence in students' academic and professional activities. From an academic perspective, it substantiates that this skill enables students to participate in lectures, conferences, and international projects conducted in English; from a professional perspective, it serves as a crucial factor ensuring specialists' competitiveness. The article also analyzes the interrelationship between listening comprehension and speaking, reading, and writing skills, as well as the problems inherent in traditional listening comprehension exercises (artificial materials that do not reflect real-life speech). The article substantiates the need to pay special attention to developing listening comprehension skills in higher education and to systematically develop them in integration with other skills.

**Keywords:** Listening comprehension, higher education, English language, communicative competence, academic competence, professional competence, speech activity, competitiveness, integrated teaching, globalization.

### **Introduction**

The main goal of teaching English in the higher education system is to develop students' competence to communicate in English in professional and academic fields. As Uzbek methodologists O. Hoshimov and I. Yo'ldoshev emphasize in their work "Methodology of Teaching English", "the main goal of teaching a foreign language in higher education is to form and develop students' communicative competence,



which requires the integration of listening comprehension, speaking, reading, and writing skills” [6]. Listening comprehension, as an essential component of this competence, plays a crucial role in students’ academic and professional activities.

From an academic perspective, listening comprehension skills enable students to understand lectures, seminars, and conferences delivered in English, participate in international scientific projects, and exchange experiences with foreign specialists. According to J. Flowerdew and L. Miller, “in an academic context, listening comprehension involves not only understanding the content of a lecture but also the ability to take notes of important information, critically analyze it, and formulate one’s own opinions” [3]. In modern higher education, literature, textbooks, and scientific articles in many disciplines are in English, and mastering them often requires listening comprehension of audio and video materials (online courses, webinars, video lectures). J. Harmer, in his book “The Practice of English Language Teaching”, writes on this matter: “with the development of digital technologies, the importance of listening comprehension is increasingly growing, as students now have the opportunity to access numerous audio and video materials not only in the classroom but also independently” [4].

From a professional perspective, a modern specialist needs to be able to freely understand spoken English in order to study international experiences in their field, conduct negotiations with international partners, participate in joint projects, and work in foreign companies. O. Hoshimov, in his work “Modern Pedagogical Technologies in Teaching Foreign Languages”, notes: “in the context of the global economy, specialists’ knowledge of English has become one of the important factors ensuring their competitiveness. In particular, listening comprehension skill is of great importance in direct communication with foreign partners, conducting negotiations, and participating in conferences” [5].

Listening comprehension is closely interconnected with other types of speech activities. L. Vandergrift and C.C.M. Goh explain this relationship as follows: “listening comprehension is interrelated with speaking, reading, and writing skills, and their development occurs interdependently. For example, developing speaking skills requires first understanding speech samples and mastering the necessary models from them” [7]. J. Field similarly states, “effective communication requires accurately understanding the interlocutor’s speech and providing an appropriate response.



Therefore, students with underdeveloped listening comprehension skills cannot be considered to have fully developed overall communicative competence” [2].

The practice of teaching English in higher education shows that although students often achieve relatively high results in grammar and reading skills, they encounter serious difficulties in understanding spoken English in real-life situations (especially various accents and fast speech). G. Buck explains this problem as follows: “traditional listening comprehension exercises are often based on artificial and simplified audio materials that do not reflect the complexities of real-life speech. As a result, although students may perform well in the classroom, they struggle to understand spoken English in real-life situations” [1].

Agreeing with the above viewpoints, I believe that in the process of teaching English in higher education, special attention should be paid to developing listening comprehension skills, systematically developing them in integration with other skills. This, in turn, ensures not only students’ academic success but also their future professional competitiveness. Particularly in an era of globalization, where international cooperation ties are expanding, the ability to comprehend spoken English is more important than ever.

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