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METHODOLOGY FOR DEVELOPING LISTENING COMPREHENSION SKILLS OF PRIMARY EDUCATION STUDENTS

Sidiqova Dilora Shavkatovna
Associate Professor, Department of Preschool and Primary Education, Asia International University, PhD in Pedagogical Sciences

Abstract. The article examines the methodological foundations for developing the listening comprehension skills of undergraduate students majoring in primary education. Listening is treated not as a passive reception of sound but as an active, goal-oriented cognitive process in which the listener builds meaning by combining linguistic knowledge, background knowledge and situational context. The author argues that future primary school teachers need well-developed listening skills for two reasons: first, as learners who must master professional and foreign-language input, and second, as educators who will later shape the listening culture of young children. A staged methodological model is proposed that integrates pre-listening, while-listening and post-listening activities with explicit metacognitive training, task-based learning and interactive digital resources. The practical techniques described in the paper can be applied in courses on the native language, children's literature, foreign language and pedagogical communication.

Keywords: listening comprehension, primary education, future teachers, metacognitive strategies, bottom-up and top-down processing, task-based learning, auditory perception, professional competence.

1. Introduction

The modernisation of higher education in Uzbekistan places growing emphasis on the communicative and professional competence of future teachers. The Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan "On Education" (2020) and the Concept for the Development of the Higher Education System until 2030 identify the quality of teacher training as a key factor in improving the national school system. Among the competences that a primary school teacher needs, the ability to listen attentively, to understand spoken messages accurately and to respond to them appropriately occupies a special place, because almost every lesson in the early grades is organised around oral interaction.

Nevertheless, in university practice listening is often regarded as a skill that develops by itself, as a by-product of lectures, seminars and conversation. Students are frequently tested on what they have heard, yet they are rarely taught how to listen. As a result, many first- and second-year students experience difficulties in following extended academic speech, distinguishing main ideas from supporting details, recognising the speaker's intention and retaining information long enough to use it. These difficulties become even more visible when the input is in a foreign language, which is a compulsory component of the primary education curriculum.

The purpose of this article is to substantiate and describe a methodology for developing the listening comprehension skills of students of the primary education programme. To achieve this purpose, the study sets the following objectives: to clarify the psychological and linguistic nature of listening comprehension; to identify the

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component skills that future primary teachers require; to design a staged instructional model; and to outline practical techniques and assessment tools that can be used in university courses.

2. Theoretical background

Contemporary research describes listening comprehension as an interactive process in which two types of processing operate simultaneously. Bottom-up processing moves from the smallest units of the speech signal, such as sounds, words and grammatical structures, towards larger units of meaning. Top-down processing, in contrast, relies on the listener's prior knowledge, expectations and understanding of context to interpret what is heard. J. Field stresses that skilled listeners constantly shift between these two modes, and that weak decoding at the word level forces learners to compensate excessively with guessing, which often leads to misunderstanding.

A second important line of research concerns metacognition. L. Vandergrift and C. Goh show that listeners who plan, monitor and evaluate their own comprehension achieve noticeably better results than those who simply listen and answer questions. Metacognitive awareness includes knowledge about oneself as a listener, knowledge about the nature of listening tasks and knowledge of strategies such as predicting, selective attention, inferencing and checking. According to these authors, such awareness can be developed through regular guided reflection rather than through listening practice alone.

From the perspective of developmental psychology, L. S. Vygotsky's idea of the zone of proximal development explains why listening tasks should be slightly above the learner's current level and accompanied by support from the teacher or peers. Scaffolding, which is gradually withdrawn as students become more independent, allows them to cope with increasingly authentic and complex input. M. Rost adds that listening is always socially situated: the listener interprets not only words but also the relationship between speakers, their purposes and the cultural norms that shape the conversation.

For future primary school teachers, these theoretical positions have a dual significance. On the one hand, students themselves must become competent listeners in their academic and professional environment. On the other hand, they must understand the mechanisms of listening well enough to teach young children to listen to instructions, stories, poems and classmates' answers. Therefore, the methodology proposed below is designed so that students not only practise listening but also analyse the techniques they experience and transfer them to their future classroom.

3. Methodology

The methodology is built on the principles of gradual complexity, integration of the four language skills, reflection and professional orientation. Its core is a three-phase listening cycle (pre-listening, while-listening and post-listening) combined with a metacognitive component that runs through every phase. The selection of audio and video materials takes into account the students' specialty: recordings of lessons in primary classes, children's fairy tales and songs, interviews with experienced teachers, short academic lectures on pedagogy and psychology, and authentic English-language materials for young learners.

The model includes three successive stages of skill development. The content, aims and typical activities of each stage are summarised in Table 1.

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Table 1. Stages of developing listening comprehension skills of primary education students

Stage	Main aim	Typical activities
1. Perceptual (diagnostic and preparatory)	To develop phonemic hearing, word recognition and auditory attention; to diagnose the initial level	Dictation of key words, sound discrimination, gap-filling while listening, listening diaries, entry questionnaire on listening strategies
2. Strategic (analytical)	To teach prediction, selective listening, note-taking and inferencing	Predicting content from a title or picture, listening for gist and for detail, mind maps, comparing notes in pairs, guided reflection after each task
3. Professional (creative)	To apply listening skills in pedagogical situations and transfer them to work with children	Analysing recorded primary lessons, active listening role-plays, designing listening tasks for pupils, micro-teaching with peer feedback

At the perceptual stage, the teacher's priority is to remove basic decoding obstacles. Short recordings of one to two minutes are used, and each is listened to several times with a different task. Students learn to recognise word boundaries in connected speech, reduced forms and intonation patterns that signal questions, contrast or emotion. An entry questionnaire, adapted from the Metacognitive Awareness Listening Questionnaire proposed by L. Vandergrift and colleagues, helps students and the teacher identify which strategies are already used and which are missing.

At the strategic stage, attention shifts from individual words to the organisation of the whole message. Before listening, students activate their background knowledge and formulate expectations; during listening, they check these expectations, take notes using abbreviations and symbols, and mark points they did not understand; after listening, they compare their versions with a partner and listen again to resolve disagreements. This cycle of predicting, verifying and evaluating is repeated systematically so that it gradually becomes an automatic habit.

At the professional stage, listening is placed in contexts that are close to the future work of a primary teacher. Students watch recordings of real lessons and analyse how the teacher listens to pupils, how instructions are formulated and how misunderstandings are handled. They then design their own listening activities for children of grades 1 to 4 and test them during micro-teaching sessions. In this way, the skill acquired by the student becomes a methodological tool for teaching.

4. Practical techniques

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Several techniques have proved particularly useful for implementing the model in university seminars. The first is the "listen – stop – predict" technique, in which the teacher pauses a story or lecture at key moments and asks students to anticipate what will follow. This keeps attention active and makes the role of top-down processing visible. The second is dictogloss: students hear a short text twice, write down key words, and then reconstruct the passage in small groups. The activity combines listening with grammar awareness, cooperation and written expression.

The third technique is the listening diary, a short weekly reflection in which students record what they listened to outside the classroom, what caused difficulty and which strategy helped them. Such diaries promote learner autonomy and give the teacher valuable diagnostic information. The fourth is active listening training in pairs, where one student describes a pedagogical problem and the other responds by paraphrasing, asking clarifying questions and summarising. This exercise develops not only comprehension but also the empathetic communication that is essential when working with young children and their parents.

Digital resources considerably expand the possibilities of the methodology. Podcasts, educational video platforms and interactive quiz services allow students to listen at their own pace, adjust playback speed and receive immediate feedback. However, technology is effective only when it is embedded in a clear pedagogical sequence; otherwise, students tend to consume content passively. For this reason, every online listening task in the proposed system is accompanied by a pre-listening question, a focused while-listening task and a short reflective follow-up.

5. Discussion

The proposed methodology shifts the emphasis from testing listening to teaching it. Its distinctive feature is the combination of linguistic, cognitive and professional dimensions within one coherent system. While traditional seminar practice usually checks comprehension through questions after a single hearing, the model described here makes the process of understanding transparent and gives students tools for managing it. This corresponds to the conclusions of C. Goh, who notes that metacognitive instruction helps less proficient listeners in particular, because it reduces anxiety and gives them a sense of control over the task.

Assessment within the methodology is formative as well as summative. Alongside traditional comprehension tests, it is recommended to use strategy questionnaires at the beginning and end of the course, analysis of listening diaries, observation checklists during micro-teaching and self-assessment rubrics. Such a combination allows the teacher to evaluate not only the final product of listening but also the growth of students' strategic awareness and their readiness to teach listening to pupils. The effectiveness of the model can be confirmed through a pedagogical experiment comparing experimental and control groups over at least one academic semester.

6. Conclusion

Listening comprehension is a complex skill that requires purposeful and systematic development in the training of future primary school teachers. The analysis shows that the most productive approach is one that unites bottom-up and top-down processing, develops metacognitive awareness and links classroom listening tasks with authentic professional situations. The three-stage model presented in this article, comprising perceptual, strategic and professional stages, offers university teachers a

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clear framework for organising this work. Its implementation contributes not only to students' academic success but also to their future ability to cultivate attentive and thoughtful listeners in primary school classrooms.

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