AUTHENTIC LISTENING-BASED TASKS AS A TESOL MECHANISM FOR DEVELOPING THE INTERPRETING-ORIENTED COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE OF PROSPECTIVE TRANSLATORS

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Abstract. The thesis substantiates authentic listening-based tasks as a TESOL mechanism for training prospective translators. The EF EPI 2025 skill profile of Uzbekistan shows that listening (385 points) is 44 points below the overall score and 113 points below writing. Meta-analytic evidence on task-based language teaching (d = 0.93; g = 0.61) supports a three-phase task cycle built on authentic professional speech.

Keywords: prospective translator, listening comprehension, interpreting, TESOL, task-based language teaching, authentic materials, communicative competence.

INTRODUCTION

An interpreter can render only what has first been understood. Before any decision about equivalence, register or terminology is taken, the incoming speech has to be segmented, held in memory and interpreted in its context. Listening comprehension is therefore the entry point of professional translation activity. In foreign language courses for prospective translators, however, listening is often treated as a supporting skill and practised mainly through short textbook recordings that bear little resemblance to the speech of negotiations, press conferences or consultations.

The need to revise this practice is confirmed by international monitoring. In the 2025 EF English Proficiency Index, Uzbekistan scored 429 points and ranked 104th of 123 countries, and for the first time the report published scores for individual skills [6; 7]. TESOL methodology, which combines needs analysis, task-based language teaching (TBLT) and continuous assessment of learners' language development [2; 4; 9], offers a framework for turning such diagnostic data into concrete teaching decisions. **The aim** of the thesis is to substantiate authentic listening-based tasks as a pedagogical mechanism for developing the interpreting-oriented communicative competence of prospective translators.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study is based on secondary data analysis. The first source is the EF EPI 2025 country profile of Uzbekistan, which reports scores on a 0–700 scale for reading, listening, writing and speaking, as well as for job functions [7]. The second source is the meta-analysis of TBLT programmes by L. Bryfonski and T.H. McKay [1] and its re-analysis by Q. Xuan and colleagues [10]. Effect sizes were interpreted according to the L2-specific benchmarks of L. Plonsky and F. Oswald, where d ≈ 0.40, 0.70 and 1.00 correspond to small, medium and large effects respectively [8]. Descriptive statistics (deviation from the overall score, ratio to the strongest skill) and pedagogical modelling were applied.

RESULTS

The skill profile reveals a clear imbalance between productive and receptive skills (Table 1).

Table 1. English skill profile of Uzbekistan (EF EPI 2025)

Skill	Score	Deviation from overall	Share of the strongest	Rank within the profile

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		score (429)	skill, %	
Writing	498	+69	100.0	1
Speaking	454	+25	91.2	2
Reading	420	–9	84.3	3
Listening	385	–44	77.3	4

Source: author's calculations based on the EF EPI country profile [7].

Listening is the only skill that falls far below the overall score: it is 44 points lower than the national result and 113 points lower than writing. The mean score of receptive skills (402.5) is 73.5 points below that of productive skills (476.0). The distribution by job function points in the same direction: students scored 392, teachers 467 and specialists in the legal field 367 [7]. The 75-point gap between teachers and students suggests that teachers' own proficiency is not yet fully converted into learners' outcomes.

The evidence on TBLT is encouraging. Across 52 studies, TBLT programmes produced an effect of d = 0.93, and programmes designed on the basis of needs analysis showed stronger results [1]. When the same data were re-analysed on 16 studies with pre-test control, the effect decreased to g = 0.61 [10], which still exceeds the threshold of a small effect [8].

On this basis a three-phase cycle of authentic listening-based tasks was designed. **The pre-task phase** includes a brief on the communicative situation (who speaks, to whom and for what purpose), activation of background knowledge and compilation of a draft glossary. **The main task** is built on an authentic recording of 3–5 minutes (a press conference, lecture, court hearing or medical consultation) and requires note-taking followed by consecutive rendering into Uzbek. **The post-task phase** combines re-listening with a transcript, analysis of omissions and distortions, and updating of the glossary log.

DISCUSSION

The results justify shifting the emphasis of translator-oriented English courses from productive to receptive work. The relatively high writing score indicates that students can produce language when they have time to plan, whereas real-time processing of authentic speech remains the bottleneck. This is precisely the condition an interpreter faces, which is why listening tasks should reproduce the speed, accent variety and discourse structure of real professional events rather than adapted recordings.

The low score in the legal field confirms the value of domain-specific materials. Recordings of legal consultations or court proceedings combine specialised terminology with formal register and thus prepare students for a sector where demand for qualified translators is high. Such tasks are consistent with the social-constructivist approach of D. Kiraly, who links translator education with authentic projects [5], and with the EMT Competence Framework, which treats language, translation and service provision as interrelated areas [3].

The size of the expected effect should be estimated cautiously. Since the original TBLT estimate dropped from 0.93 to 0.61 after re-analysis [1; 10], a medium effect is a realistic expectation for translator training. The EF EPI is based on a voluntary online test and may not fully represent the population [7]; therefore, the proposed cycle requires verification through a pedagogical experiment with pre-test, post-test and delayed post-test measurements in experimental and control groups.

CONCLUSION

1. Listening comprehension (385 points) is the weakest link of the English skill profile in Uzbekistan, lagging 113 points behind writing; for prospective interpreters this gap is critical.

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2. Meta-analytic evidence shows a medium-to-large effect of task-based teaching (g = 0.61 – d = 0.93), especially when tasks are designed on the basis of needs analysis.

3. A three-phase cycle of authentic listening-based tasks (situation brief and glossary, note-taking with consecutive rendering, re-listening and error analysis) is proposed as a TESOL mechanism for developing the interpreting-oriented communicative competence of prospective translators.

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