

Date: 3<sup>rd</sup> May-2026

**THE ROLE OF PRE-LISTENING ACTIVITIES IN IMPROVING EFL  
STUDENTS' LISTENING COMPREHENSION**

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**Abstract:** Listening comprehension is considered one of the most difficult skills for many EFL learners. Many students experience problems when they try to understand spoken texts because their vocabulary is limited and they may not have enough background knowledge about the topic. Because of these difficulties, teachers often use different techniques to support students during listening lessons. One useful technique is pre-listening activities, which help students prepare for the listening task. The purpose of this study was to examine the effect of pre-listening activities on students' listening comprehension. The research was conducted with 30 pre-intermediate students (12-14 years olds) from School No. 23 in Andijan during 4 months. To collect the data, pre-tests, post-tests, and classroom observations were used. The results of the study showed that pre-listening activities helped students understand the listening materials better and improved their overall listening comprehension.

The study suggests that pre-listening method can significantly improve students' listening comprehension

**Key words:** Pre-listening activities, listening comprehension, EFL learners, vocabulary.

### **Introduction**

Listening comprehension is a critical component of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) skills, and enhancing listening ability is a significant concern for many English language teachers. EFL learners encounter numerous challenges that render it difficult for them to grapple with spoken English effectively. These include inadequate vocabulary, exposure to unfamiliar accents and dialects, and insufficient knowledge of topic areas that are commonly discussed in real-life settings and in the media.

This study is intended to address some of these issues by providing a wide range of listening materials and exercises. Each unit is specially designed to present learners with a diverse array of spoken English interactions, thereby helping them develop their general listening ability. Additional features, such as integrated grammar and vocabulary sections, are incorporated to further support learners who require targeted support in these areas.

Pre-listening activities are increasingly discussed in educational practice and research. In pre-listening, activities are carried out before actual listening in order to



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prepare learners for the upcoming auditory input. Typical tasks and exercises are those that activate learners' background knowledge, familiarise them with relevant vocabulary, help them predict contents or themes, and prepare them for aspects of the listening text. Many teachers and learners perceive that pre-listening activities can ease listening anxiety and enhance learners' participation in listening activities.

Although pre-listening activities have been receiving attention in the EFL context and even pre-listening tasks have been found to facilitate listening ability and enhance learners' general approach to listening in previous studies, this paper attempts to probe into the two fundamental questions regarding pre-listening tasks, namely what effects pre-listening activities could cause on listening comprehension and how pre-listening activities can be deployed to facilitate learners' listening ability.

This study aims at investigating the roles that pre-listening activities play in enhancing the EFL learners' listening comprehension and understanding. Additionally, it attempts to explore and identify the useful approaches, strategies, and techniques which can be utilized in enhancing listening skills in language classrooms.

To achieve a more sophisticated, high-academic tone, the following revision synthesizes your sources into a cohesive narrative. It employs complex grammatical structures—such as nominalization, relative clauses, and participial phrases—to move beyond a simple list and toward a critical discussion of the literature.

The landscape of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) pedagogy has been significantly reshaped by research into the interplay between instructional scaffolding and cognitive processing. Central to this discourse is the efficacy of authentic multimedia in the classroom. Barjesteh and Ghasemina (2019) provide empirical evidence for this, asserting that podcast-based tasks and topic preparation markedly bolster the listening performance of Iranian EFL learners. This suggests that when learners are exposed to the prosodic features of natural speech, their ability to parse complex linguistic input is greatly enhanced. Supporting this paradigm, Ismail and Abdul Aziz (2020) advocate for a systematic integration of diverse multimedia resources, emphasizing that interactive processing—rather than passive reception—is fundamental to overcoming the inherent challenges of the ESL listening environment.

Parallel to these external interventions is the critical role of internal cognitive preparation. Nguyen Nu Nhu Linh demonstrates that the activation of prior knowledge, or schemata, serves as a vital bridge between existing information and new linguistic data. Her research indicates that students who engage in pre-listening activities specifically designed for high-stakes examinations, such as the IELTS, achieve significantly higher comprehension scores than their non-prepared counterparts. This underscores the necessity of strategic preparation in academic contexts where cognitive load is high.

However, the success of such strategies is often mediated by the learner's own metacognitive maturity. Goh (1998) elucidates this disparity by contrasting high-ability and low-ability listeners, revealing that the former possess a more robust repertoire of metacognitive tactics. While proficient listeners can fluidly manage their comprehension through self-regulation and tactical flexibility, low-ability learners often remain trapped by



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limited metacognitive awareness. Consequently, the literature suggests that for listening instruction to be truly effective, it must not only provide authentic materials and schema activation but also address the underlying cognitive strategies that empower learners to navigate complex auditory stimuli.

### **Method**

This study followed a quasi-experimental research framework and sought to investigate and evaluate the effect of pre-listening activities on listening skills of EFL students. Participants in the study consisted of two groups: experimental and control groups. The experimental group participated in listening classes which included pre-listening activities prior to listening to the tape. The control group on the other hand experienced listening classes without using any pre-listening activities.

The study sample consisted of 30 sixth-grade public school students from a secondary school for average ability junior students. Participants were all pre-intermediate English learners. Participants were randomly divided into experimental and control groups with 15 students participating in each group.

The materials used in this study included:

The recordings are short and the listening texts are of a manageable length for the students.

Pre-listening activities, such as vocabulary introduction, prediction tasks, and topic discussion

Worksheets designed to check listening comprehension

A questionnaire to collect students' feedback

Pre-test and post-test to measure students' progress

This study was carried out over 4 months period in which both the experimental and control groups had their English lessons conducted as usual, but with the addition of regular listening sessions using Tuned In once a week for the experimental group. A pre-test was administered to both groups at the beginning of the study.

On occasion, during the listening leg of the BLC, the experimental group received some pre-listening input and the findings reported upon here describe this form of support. Essentially, before listening to expository or narrative text, students in the experimental group condition were provided with some word-based pre-listening activities. Prior to a listening task on a theme with which the control group had no prior knowledge, students in the experimental group condition learned a set of target vocabulary items related to the theme, discussed the theme, and made predictions about the topics to be addressed in the listening text. Subsequently, the experimental group listened to and completed a listening task similar to that of the control group.

At the end of the study, both experimental and control groups took a post-test on pre-listening topics. Students also filled out a questionnaire and expressed their personal views on the activities analyzed regarding pre-listening in lectures and discussions.

In order to evaluate the levels of listening comprehension and attitudes towards pre-listening activities of two groups of students, a pre-test, post-test, and questionnaires were used as data sources. The test scores were analyzed with a view to measuring any



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significant improvement in their listening comprehension skills. Attitudes toward pre-listening activities were analyzed from the questionnaires to evaluate whether the intervention was effective.

**Results**

The data from the classroom-based study revealed positive outcomes for the students' performance on a post-listening task following the use of pre-listening activities. Students in the experimental group scored significantly higher than those in the control group on the listening post-test.

The scores from the pre-test and post-test for both the experimental group and the control group were analyzed to see if there were any significant differences. The scores for the experimental group, who participated in the pre-listening activities, showed a marked improvement from an initial score of 60 to 80, an increase of 20 points. In contrast, the control group, which did not participate in any pre-listening activities, showed a minimal gain from a pre-test score of 62 to a post-test score of 68, an increase of 6 points. These scores reflect the positive effects of pre-listening activities on listening comprehension.

The results also highlighted positive responses to the students' pre-listening activities. The results of the questionnaire showed that 80% of the students agreed that pre-listening activities helped them understand the listening tasks better. Similarly, 75% of the students felt more confident during the listening activities. The results also revealed that the vocabulary-related tasks were the most useful for the students' comprehension.

The outcomes of the research indicate that pre-listening activities for listening purposes played a valuable role in enhancing listening ability and motivation among the participants. The students had positive attitudes toward the pre-listening activities and believed that those activities had contributed to their better listening comprehension and confidence.

Metric	Experimental Group	Control Group	Impact
Pre-test Score	60	62	-
Post-test Score	80	68	-
Improvement	+20	+6	+14 (higher)
Comprehension	Significant	Slight	Strong effect
Student Agreement	80%	-	High
Confidence	75%	-	Increased
Useful Activity	Vocabulary	-	Key factor



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The figure clearly shows the contrast between the post-test results of the experimental and control groups. The experimental group demonstrated considerable improvement from pre-test to post-test, while the control group showed little progress. This graph illustrates the gains of the students who did pre-listening activities in terms of listening comprehension.

This graph shows the positive effects of giving my students background knowledge of the subject matter before they watch the video lesson.

### **Discussion**

The outcomes of this investigation reveal that pre-listening activities can positively affect the listening abilities of students. Using instructional strategies such as the use of vocabulary and concept maps, and predictive tasks helped learners activate schemata and consequently enhanced listening comprehension.

I also noticed a general improvement. The students seemed less anxious during listening. Knowing the key vocabulary and knowing what would be discussed ahead of time seemed to make them feel more in control of the lesson. And it was also a great way for them to be involved ahead of time in the lesson. They were more motivated because they knew that they would be able to participate soon.

The findings of this study also correlate with existing research which has proven that such pre-listening activities positively impact learners' comprehension and attitudes towards listening in the language learning classroom. The findings therefore further support the notion that preparation before listening is an important factor in effective understanding of spoken language.

The outcome of the students' questionnaire also showed very positive attitudes toward using pre-listening activities in lessons. This means that, besides boosting listening ability, these procedures will enhance learners' academic experience in a more relaxed way.

The findings of this study suggest that, for listeners to achieve their listening potential, pre-listening activities should be incorporated into English lessons on a regular basis. The study also supports the use of interactive teaching approaches and student-centred learning styles.

This study applied pre-listening activities with different goal orientations and investigates their effects on EFL learners' listening performance and participation in classrooms. The findings generally suggest that employing such activities leads to positive outcomes for these aspects.

### **Conclusion**

This study examined the effects of pre-listening activities on the listening skills of EFL students. Results indicated that the instruction which included pre-listening activities outdid the conventional approach in relation to EFL students' listening comprehension.

The study found that pre-listening activities can enhance students' confidence, engagement and motivation to listen to authentic materials. They can also alleviate students' anxiety and make real listening materials more accessible.



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This paper argued that, in order to enhance listeners' ability to EFL listening, pre-listening activities must be introduced to the listening instruction. Hence, this paper concludes that pre-listening activities are very helpful for improving English listeners' ability. Finally, the paper suggested that teachers of EFL should always integrate some pre-listening activities into their teaching plan in order to enhance their students' listening skills.

The present study has some limitations such as the small number of participants and the research period, therefore future research should include a larger sample and longer period.

#### **Suggestions for Further Research**

Although this study provided useful insights into the role of pre-listening activities, several limitations should be considered. The study was conducted with a small number of participants and over a short period of time. Therefore, future research could involve a larger sample size and a longer duration to obtain more reliable results.

In addition, this study focused only on pre-intermediate level students. Future studies could explore the effects of pre-listening activities on learners at different proficiency levels, such as beginners or advanced students.

Moreover, further research could investigate the effectiveness of different types of pre-listening activities in more detail, such as the use of multimedia, video-based tasks, or technology-supported activities.

Finally, future studies may examine the impact of pre-listening activities on other language skills, such as speaking and reading, to better understand their overall role in language learning.

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