

TEACHING LISTENING COMPREHENSION IN ESP COURSES AT
NON-PHILOLOGICAL HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

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Abstract. *This article explores the methodology of teaching listening comprehension within English for Specific Purposes (ESP) courses. It highlights that developing effective listening skills among first-year students relies heavily on the use of task sets. When designing these tasks, educators must consider the role, objectives, and alignment of listening within the educational process. Given the high proportion of students' independent study time—including listening—these task sets should include detailed guidance and instructional notes (listening guides).*

Introduction

One of the fundamental principles in foreign language instruction is the **principle of integration**. It involves the simultaneous development of communicative, professional, informational, academic, and social skills. In practice, this means that isolating one aspect of language or speech activity from others is neither effective nor feasible. For ESP, all forms of speech activity must be integrated into the learning process.

When teaching listening, educators are also developing speaking, reading, and cognitive skills such as memory and critical thinking. Thus, in ESP instruction for professional purposes, listening should not be taught in isolation but as part of a comprehensive language acquisition process.

However, fostering skills like logical reasoning, analytical thinking, and identifying main ideas through a foreign language is often constrained by several factors. One key issue is the **limited number of instructional hours**, which does not match the high standards expected of legal university graduates.

Key Findings and Results

To address these challenges, the integration of **electronic learning tools**—particularly **blended learning models**—is proposed. These models are especially suitable in non-philological institutions where independent study dominates.

They encourage educators to develop resources that facilitate mastering various types of speech activity and language components.

In legal education, reading is traditionally prioritized, being the most efficient way to acquire new information. Nevertheless, listening plays a critical role in foreign language communication and deserves equal attention in the curriculum. Studies suggest that in ESP course design, the following proportions are ideal:

Listening – 45%

Speaking – 30%

Reading – 16%

Writing – 9%

This allocation prepares students for future professional tasks where they will need to engage with not only printed materials but also audio and video content. Moreover, many legal tasks involve discussions and negotiations, requiring strong listening comprehension, rapid processing of spoken information, and distinguishing primary from secondary content.

Therefore, the **effective organization of listening instruction for professional purposes** becomes a key responsibility of educators.

The Nature of Listening as a Receptive Skill

Listening is defined as a **receptive speech activity** involving the simultaneous reception and understanding of spoken input. It is among the most complex skills to master, as it requires the activation of multiple mental and psychological mechanisms. Learners must process sound-based information, recognize it, and comprehend its meaning.

At law universities, the objective of teaching listening is to develop strategies that allow students to extract, understand, and later use the information obtained via listening—whether in oral or written communication. Students should learn to process not only printed texts but also audio and video materials, and apply this information in analytical tasks, comparisons, and structured evaluations.

Listening Strategies and ESP Context

Listening strategies refer to a set of goal-oriented actions. In the context of legal English, they are aimed at understanding spoken professional discourse or extracting relevant information for academic and occupational use. Listening materials used in ESP must mirror real-life scenarios and support the development of practical communication skills.

The Role of Blended Learning in ESP Listening Instruction

When applied to ESP, **blended learning** enables listening to serve several educational functions:

1. As a Learning Goal:

Enables acquisition of foreign language comprehension skills.

Teaches students to extract and apply information effectively.

2. As a Learning Tool:

Allows access to diverse formats (text, audio, video).

Supports creative tasks through authentic materials.

3. As a Means of Assessment:

Facilitates evaluation of vocabulary and content understanding (e.g., gap-fill exercises).

Combines classroom activities with independent work via LMS (Learning Management Systems).

Effective Listening Instruction Techniques

To enhance the effectiveness of listening instruction, students should be provided with:

A wide range of **audio and video materials**

Clear and structured listening guides tailored to the goals of the task

Listening serves multiple purposes:

As a learning objective: Practice builds listening proficiency.

As a tool for self-study: Encourages research and independent learning.

As an evaluation method: Allows the teacher to support and monitor student progress, even outside the classroom.

Given that students cannot always receive real-time feedback outside of class, **structured listening guides** help fill this gap with step-by-step instructions.

Recommendations for Listening Practice

Video content is often more effective than audio-only materials for several reasons:

Abundant resources available on platforms like **YouTube**

Visual context enhances comprehension

Authenticity of language use reflects real-world legal communication

These videos often align with socio-political topics and are presented in text-rich formats, developing:

Academic listening skills

Sources for essays, reports, and projects

 **Conclusion**

Teaching listening comprehension in ESP contexts—especially at non-philological institutions like law universities—requires a balanced, integrative approach. Listening should not be isolated but embedded within a broader system of language acquisition that includes speaking, reading, and writing. The use of **blended learning**, authentic materials, and guided strategies can significantly enhance listening instruction. Educators must prioritize listening not only as a language skill but also as a **professional tool**—vital for legal practice, collaboration, and decision-making. Thus, developing students’ listening competence through structured, relevant, and resource-rich instruction is an essential component of modern ESP teaching.