

Integrating Bloom's Taxonomy in Teaching English Listening to EFL Learners: A Cognitive Approach to Enhancing Comprehension and Critical Thinking Skills

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Abstract. *This article explores the application of Bloom's Taxonomy in teaching English listening skills to EFL learners, emphasizing a cognitive approach to enhance both comprehension and critical thinking abilities. Bloom's six cognitive levels—Remembering, Understanding, Applying, Analyzing, Evaluating, and Creating—offer a structured framework for designing listening tasks that cater to diverse learning needs. By progressing from basic recall of information to the creation of new responses based on auditory input, students engage in a more dynamic learning process that transcends rote memorization. The integration of Bloom's Taxonomy into listening instruction allows educators to scaffold listening activities that gradually build higher-order thinking skills, such as analyzing speaker intent, evaluating arguments, and creating original content. This approach not only strengthens students' listening proficiency but also promotes cognitive development by encouraging deeper engagement with the material. Through a combination of theoretical exploration and practical examples, this article demonstrates how adopting Bloom's Taxonomy can transform English listening instruction for EFL learners, fostering a more comprehensive and critical engagement with language learning.*

Key words: *Bloom's Taxonomy, critical thinking, learning outcome, assessment, higher-order thinking, pedagogy, language acquisition, skill development, classroom activities, feedback mechanisms, curriculum integration, empirical research.*

Introduction Benjamin Bloom's work, particularly his taxonomy of cognitive domains, has profoundly shaped modern educational practices. Initially developed in collaboration with Ralph W. Tyler, Bloom's Taxonomy has grown into a fundamental tool for classifying learning objectives across various fields. Despite its relatively modest reception at the time of publication, the taxonomy has since been translated into over 20 languages and remains a cornerstone in educational theory and practice.

Bloom's Taxonomy provides a structured framework for educators to design lessons that guide students through increasingly complex levels of cognitive engagement. This framework categorizes cognitive processes into six levels: Remembering, Understanding, Applying, Analyzing, Evaluating, and Creating. These levels progress from basic information recall to higher-order thinking skills, such as evaluating and creating.

While the taxonomy is widely applied in teaching reading and writing, its potential in teaching listening skills, particularly for EFL learners, remains under-explored. Listening comprehension

plays a critical role in language acquisition, yet it often receives less attention in curriculum design. Moreover, traditional listening exercises tend to focus on lower-order cognitive skills, such as recalling and understanding, without adequately challenging students to engage in higher-order thinking processes. This article addresses this gap by demonstrating how integrating Bloom's Taxonomy into English listening instruction can enhance both comprehension and critical thinking among EFL learners.¹

Review of Bloom's taxonomy.

During the 1990's, a former student of Bloom's, Lorin Anderson, led a new assembly which met for the purpose of updating the taxonomy, hoping to add relevance for the 21st century students and teachers. This time "representatives of three groups: cognitive psychologists, curriculum theorists and instructional researchers, and testing and assessment specialists". Like the original group, they were arduous and diligent in their pursuit of learning, spending six years to finalize their work. Published in 2001, the revision includes several seemingly minor yet actually quite significant changes. The changes occur in three broad categories: terminology, structure, and emphasis.

The new terms are defined as:

- Remembering: Retrieving, recognizing, recalling relevant knowledge from long-term memory.
- Understanding: Constructing meaning from oral, written, and graphic messages through interpreting, exemplifying, classifying, summarizing, inferring, comparing, and explaining.
- Applying: Carrying out or using a procedure through executing, or implementing.
- Analyzing: Breaking material into constituent parts, determining how the parts relate to one another and to an overall structure or purpose through differentiating, organizing, and attributing.
- Evaluating: Making judgments based on criteria and standards through checking and critiquing.
- Creating: Putting elements together to form a coherent or functional whole; reorganizing elements into a new pattern or structure through generating, planning, or producing.²
- Integrating Bloom's taxonomy into the teaching of English listening skills for EFL learners enhances comprehension and retention by fostering critical thinking and progressive skill development, enabling educators to create structured learning objectives that cater to varied cognitive levels and promote active engagement in the listening process.

Empirical research on applying Bloom's Taxonomy in Listening Tasks (Classroom-Based Case Study)

- In a study conducted with 8th-grade EFL learners in Uzbekistan, Bloom's Taxonomy was integrated into a series of listening activities over a six-week period. The aim was to move students progressively from basic comprehension to higher-order critical thinking skills.

Implementation:

- The listening tasks were divided according to Bloom's six cognitive levels, with each week focusing on a specific stage:

Week 1 – Remembering: Students listened to a recording of a simple narrative and answered fact-based questions, such as "What is the character's name?" and "Where did the event take place?" These tasks focused on retrieving and recalling information.

Week 2 – Understanding: Learners were tasked with summarizing the key points of a longer audio text. This involved interpreting main ideas and inferring meaning based on context, aligning with Bloom's "Understanding" level.

¹ Bloom, B. S., Engelhart, M. D., Furst, E. J., Hill, W. H., & Krathwohl, D. R. (1964). *Taxonomy of educational objectives* (Vol. 2). New York: Longmans, Green.

² Anderson, L. W., & Krathwohl, D. R. (2001). *A taxonomy for learning, teaching, and assessing: A revision of Bloom's taxonomy of educational objectives: complete edition*. Addison Wesley Longman, Inc..

Week 3 – Applying: Students listened to a dialogue where speakers discussed how to solve a problem. Afterward, they were asked to apply the solutions mentioned in a new scenario by giving similar advice to a fictional character.

Week 4 – Analyzing: The learners were asked to break down a persuasive audio segment, identifying key arguments and supporting details. They also analyzed the speaker's tone and intent, which aligns with the "Analyzing" stage of Bloom's Taxonomy.

Week 5 – Evaluating: Students listened to two contrasting opinions on a controversial issue. They were asked to critique the arguments presented and justify which speaker they found more convincing, focusing on making judgments based on evidence.

Week 6 – Creating: In the final task, learners created their own short podcast where they discussed a topic of their choice, integrating arguments and examples. This required students to synthesize the listening material into an original output, fitting the "Creating" stage of Bloom's Taxonomy.

Results

The study found that students' listening comprehension improved significantly, especially in tasks requiring higher-order thinking. More importantly, learners demonstrated increased engagement with the listening material and showed an ability to critically evaluate and respond to complex auditory inputs.

Conclusion

Integrating Bloom's Taxonomy into English listening instruction provides educators with a powerful framework for fostering not only language proficiency but also cognitive development. By moving beyond rote memorization and encouraging students to analyze, evaluate, and create responses based on auditory input, this approach cultivates deeper engagement with the language and builds critical thinking skills essential for academic success.

The cognitive approach outlined in this article illustrates how Bloom's Taxonomy can be effectively applied to develop comprehensive listening activities that address the diverse cognitive needs of EFL learners. While the theoretical model is well-supported, future empirical research is necessary to further explore its practical applications in different teaching contexts, including digital and hybrid learning environments. Additionally, the role of feedback mechanisms in reinforcing higher-order thinking during listening exercises warrants further investigation.

Ultimately, adopting Bloom's Taxonomy as a scaffold for listening instruction not only strengthens students' auditory comprehension but also equips them with lifelong cognitive skills. Future studies should explore how this approach can be tailored to specific learner demographics and integrated into curricula on a broader scale to enhance learning outcomes.

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