

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE NOVELTY FACTOR IN TEACHING LISTENING COMPREHENSION

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ABSTRACT

Aim. Acquiring the skill of listening comprehension can be considered as a difficult process, which is influenced by the personality traits of the student. Tolerance of novelty is an inherent and innovative factor in teaching a foreign language, which plays an important role in the effective processing of new information. The aim of the research is to determine the difference in listening comprehension performance between groups with different levels of tolerance of novelty.

Methods. We used standardised test to determine listening comprehension efficiency and the subscale of the Tolerance of Ambiguity Scale instrument to determine

the degree of tolerance of novelty. The research was implemented with 154 university students who studied professional English at language level B2.

Results. A statistically significant difference in listening comprehension between respondents with high and average levels of tolerance of novelty was confirmed. Furthermore, we found significantly different listening performance between respondents with high and low tolerance of novelty. Respondents with a high tolerance of novelty deliver greater results in listening in a foreign language than people with an average and low level of tolerance of novelty.

Conclusion. Research shows that students with a higher tolerance of novelty are more willing to experiment with new, alternative forms and language structures in a foreign language. The personality factor of tolerance of novelty belongs to relatively dynamic personality characteristics that can be optimised with the help of the teacher's deliberate action and in this way simultaneously stimulate the cognitive processes of listening and understanding.

Keywords: teaching, listening comprehension didactics, novelty, thought flexibility, student

INTRODUCTION

In recent decades, efficient methods for teaching and acquiring foreign languages, along with factors that support or facilitate this process, have been sought or experimented in foreign language teaching. One inherent, key and simultaneously innovative factor in teaching a foreign language is tolerance of novelty. According to Tutku Başöz (2015), the tolerance of novelty can facilitate or hinder language learning, because it expresses the need to gain experience, i.e. the degree to which an individual wants or does not want to actively participate in the search for new experiences when working with a foreign language (new vocabulary, new grammatical constructions, variety of texts, recordings, live encounter with the culture of the target language, etc.) and discovering new ideas. The novelty factor in teaching can therefore be understood as the willingness to accept, process, experiment or consider diverse learning possibilities. Tolerating new situations in the procedure of acquiring a foreign language is considered an crucial learning style (Başöz, 2015; Dewaele & Ip, 2013; Dewaele & Wei, 2013; Gadušová et al., 2021; Roubalová et al., 2023; Khonamri et al., 2020; Stranovská, 2011; Stranovská et al., 2019; Stranovská & Ficzer, 2022; Tokárová et al., 2023 and others), while the emphasis is put on the acquisition of skills (listening, reading, speaking, writing comprehension), their practice and performance, i.e. practical use not only in the educational process but especially in ordinary life situations. Among these skills, listening comprehension plays an extremely important role. The ability to understand spoken language is not only a key component of effective communication, but also a fundamental aspect

of cultural understanding and learning a foreign language. As a part of developing listening comprehension skills, students should learn flexibility in interacting with a foreigner so that they cannot only understand what their communication partner is saying, but also express what they did not understand in the oral communication, because this aspect naturally belongs to the use of a foreign language. High-quality listening comprehension teaching should also go in this direction with the use of the novelty factor, the teacher should strive for students to learn to combine familiar words in unfamiliar contexts that offer new situations, otherwise their time spent on dictionaries and textbooks is just a waste time.

Current research on the skill of listening comprehension is aimed at experimenting with modern methods and strategies for developing listening comprehension (Koby-larek et al., 2022; Purba, 2022; Umpa, 2023), to clarify the importance of receptive skills, and also to focus on some productive methods of teaching them in English as a Second Language (ESL) and English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classes (Djabborova, 2020; Gadušová et al., 2020; Gadušová & Hašková, 2020), to find out the impact of explicit teaching of listening strategy on listening comprehension in EFL students' (Civegna, 2005; Yaseen & Alahmed, 2023). According to the results, it was shown that the teaching of listening strategy had a significant effect on developing listening comprehension skills of Iraqi foreign language students. That means that the findings suggest that explicit teaching strategy improves EFL learners' listening comprehension.

Currently, there is a prevailing trend of prioritising listening of the text to the exclusion of reading the text, and an increasingly frequent phenomenon is the possibility to listen to an article in a newspaper, a report in the form of an audio recording, or podcast, which covers the same topics as in the paper or online version of the newspaper, which is provided by various renowned foreign newspapers such as *The Guardian*, *The New York Times* or *Die Zeit*. The result is that learners, whether native speakers or foreign language learners, have to get used to audio materials and develop their listening comprehension skills.

NOVELTY FACTOR AND OPENNESS TO EXPERIENCE

The novelty factor or tolerance of novelty represents a part of tolerance of ambiguity (TA), which can be perceived as the inclination to view uncertain situations as favourable. According to David L. McLain et al. (2015), tolerance of novelty correlates with an individual's cognitive responsiveness to uncertain stimuli, rooted in neurophysiological functioning. It means that novelty can elicit both aversion and attraction. These responses hinge upon how the perception of an ambiguous stimulus interacts with contextual information and anticipated outcomes. Sensitivity denotes the extent of an individual's reaction to the perception of an ambiguous or novel

stimulus. Theoretically, this sensitivity can vary from intense aversion to extreme attraction. Extreme aversion may manifest either as outright rejection of the stimulus or as heightened motivational arousal to diminish the ambiguity to an acceptable level. Conversely, extreme attraction represents maximal motivation to explore and embrace ambiguity, relishing its novelty, complexity, and intractability, resulting in elevated levels of curiosity and positive emotions. Cognitively, sensitivity manifests in two primary forms: an individual may encounter fear or anxiety in response to perceived ambiguity (Hirsh et al., 2012), both of which can spur a quest for clarity, while anxiety might present as arousal in situations of attraction (Levi, 1965).

The novelty factor or tolerance of novelty can be identified with the factor of openness to experience (Big Five). According to Sarah Mercer et al. (2012), openness to experience is associated with successful communication skills and interest in a foreign language. Openness to experience can be defined as the tendency to expose oneself to new, unconventional or challenging ideas and perceptions (McCrae & Costa, 1987), at the same time it can be characterised by intelligence, creativity, curiosity, cultural values, perceptiveness and acumen (Orzeck & Lung, 2005; Peabody & Goldberg, 1989). It is a relatively broad dimension including a number of characteristics that may not be very closely related to each other (McCrae, 2004). Individuals exhibiting a high level of openness to experience can be characterized as those who tend to actively expose themselves to new, unconventional or challenging ideas and perceptions, enjoy discovering new ideas and methods (Simha & Parboteeah, 2020). In a general context, this is a dimension that according to Robert R. McCrae (2004) includes characteristics such as TA, need for variety in stimuli, aesthetic sensibility, intellectual curiosity and intuition. Also it includes intelligence, creativity, cultural values, and acumen (Orzeck & Lung, 2005). Due to the wide scope of this dimension, in some research it is included by the term Intellect (McCrae, 2004) and since intellect is understood in this context as perceptiveness and being analytical, openness to experience is identified as intelligence (McCrae, 2004), although in fact it is only a non-universal correlation of certain types of intelligence and characteristics of openness to experience (Hřebíčková, 2004). The researchers' effort was to categorise such a large number of constructs into more systematic units. Persons reaching high scores indicate a rich imagination and are more receptive to experiencing emotions. They take into account new ideas and unconventional values, i.e. higher TA and more liberal attitudes. They describe themselves as inquisitive, intellectual, willing to experiment. People scoring low on this scale tend to behave conventionally and adopt conservative attitudes. They prefer routine and learned procedures to innovations, possibly encountering resistance to change.

Tolerance of novelty in relation to learning a foreign language was researched in relation to vocabulary and perception of one's own success in a foreign language (Başöz, 2015). No significant relationship was found between tolerance of novelty and new vocabulary learning, while a significant relationship was identified between

tolerance of novelty and self-perceived achievement in learning of foreign language vocabulary. Jean-Marc Dewaele and Tsui Shan Ip (2013) traced the shift of anxiety to a degree of tolerance of novelty and found that students who displayed greater TA in the second language exhibited lower levels of anxiety, and also felt more proficient in their EFL lessons. Chen Liu (2015) focused on finding a suitable measurement tool or finding a comparability between TA and other psychological and linguistic variables. He claims that TA has the potential to develop the acquisition of a second foreign language. In line with these findings, research by Dewaele and Li Wei (2013) suggests that a higher TA can also encourage individuals to pursue multilingualism. Additionally, Abdel Salam El-Koumy (2009) investigated how TA impacts foreign language reading comprehension, finding differences in comprehension levels between high, average, and low tolerance groups. The analysis revealed a substantial difference in average scores between the groups categorised by high, medium, and low TA. Interestingly, the group with average tolerance scored significantly better than both the high and low tolerance groups, with no significant difference observed between the high and low groups themselves. This suggests a potential link between TA and learning strategies—students with varying levels of tolerance might adopt different approaches to learning, potentially impacting their language acquisition success. Based on these findings, it's recommended that EFL learners develop a moderate level of tolerance for ambiguity (Gudykunst, 2005).

TEACHING LISTENING COMPREHENSION

Acquiring the skill of listening comprehension can be considered as a difficult process that requires attention from both the teacher and the students. Although the skill of listening comprehension is characterised as a passive receptive communicative language skill—perceiving, receiving and processing the information heard. It is a dynamic activity in which the student performs several activities at the same time, or interacts with the listening context (Richards & Burns, 2012). The student simultaneously identifies and distinguishes the wording of the text heard, different sounds, assigns the correct meaning to individual sound units, and at the same time accepts different tempo, rhythm and melody of speech, as well as any deviations, accent or dialect of the text heard. The heard content of the text must be decoded, processed and stored, which enables the correct understanding of the text and its further interpretation within the communication process. Listening comprehension thus represents the basis for the developing of productive skills, namely speaking and writing.

Listening comprehension is characterised as a multifaceted concept encompassing several elements:

- emotional aspects, such as the desire to be involved in the exchange.

- outward actions, such as verbal and nonverbal cues that convey attentiveness.
- mental processes, including focusing on the message, grasping its meaning, receiving both the literal content and underlying emotions, and interpreting the speaker's purpose (Halone et al., 1998).

Eva Stradiotová et al. (2018) draw attention to distinguishing types of listening such as discriminative (specific sound stimuli), informational (listening with comprehension), critical (analysis of information that is presented orally and information that can be inferred from the context), critical listening usually involves problem solving and decision-making) and empathic listening (understanding or empathising with what the speaker is thinking or feeling). In the teaching of listening comprehension, informative listening is most often used. Its goal is to understand and retain information. Since memorising and retaining information are important parts of informational listening, the ability of focusing and good memory skills are key to this type of listening.

In the context of FLT, listening comprehension is understood as a skill integrating communication activities and strategies that enable the user of a foreign language to understand spoken language expression. Hans-Jürgen Hantschel et al. (2013) formulate several specific characteristics of listening:

- we cannot influence what we hear,
- transience of what is heard,
- immediacy, directness of what is heard, reception is an uncontrollable, uncontrolled process,
- parallel course of several cognitive processes (decoding, reduction, storage, prediction, creation of hypotheses and their verification and verification, or modification),
- the language is spontaneous, depending on the current situation of the speaker, the construction of sentences is simple, listening is accompanied by sounds from the environment in which it takes place.

According to John Flowerdew and Lindsay Miller (2005), listening can also be described as a process. When teaching foreign languages, knowledge of these processes is essential for teachers. Knowing these processes can help them develop this skill. Within this, he distinguishes the following listening comprehension models that the listener can use when decoding messages:

The Bottom-Up model was introduced by researchers in the field of linguistics and language didactics already in the 1940s and 1950s. Flowerdew and Miller (2005) claim that the knowledge applied in the listening process has a hierarchical nature. The hierarchical method is demonstrated by the method of decoding the message. The overall message is broken down into smaller components such as sounds, words and their meaning, followed by sentences, sentences that, when assembled, allow the listener to decode the meaning of the entire message. In general, listeners grad-

ually understand the text on the basis of individual elements through this model. Although this theory appears to be relevant and an accurate description of the listening process, it is important to consider it from another perspective. Jim Scrivener claims that it is not possible to decode the text of the so-called “item by item” (2011, 257), i.e. item by item. Flowerdew and Miller (2005) see this model as a way in which communication functions as a transfer of information. The communication process begins with the sender encoding the message, which is then transmitted through the communication channel to the receiver, which decodes the information. If it succeeds, communication does not need the wider context of the situation, the speaker or the listener.

The Top-Down model is explained by Jeremy Harmer (2015) so that the listener acquires a general view of the text heard, that in some way absorbs the overall picture”. This definition confirms that while the bottom-up model focuses on individual elements, the top-down model relies on context and background knowledge acquired throughout life. Michael Rost (2016) deals with the cognitive aspect of listening, which is also an essential part of the top-down model. According to him, listening is a cognitive process working with concepts in the listener’s mind. Some psychologists refer to the concepts we hold in our minds as schemas (Langley & Simon, 2013; Estes, 2022). These schemas are not constant because they are constantly changing based on newly created schemas. In the listening process, the main problem is to activate the most appropriate schema for understanding the input. Scrivener (2011) supports this theory and argues that the most appropriate process to achieve effective listening is a combination of both processes.

Such a process is called an interactive model, which combines bottom-up and top-down models into a synthesis in such a way that it recognises and caters for individual learning styles. When considering the levels of foreign language proficiency, the basic level is likely to start with the smallest sound units and as the learner progresses, their needs may need to shift to work on the features of rapid speech.

In addition to those mentioned, listening comprehension can be developed and practiced through other models and approaches, which include e.g. active listening, process model, transactional model, metacognition, critical listening or neurocognitive model. The mentioned models and theories point out that listening comprehension in a foreign language is a complex mental performance, which requires not only the cognitive capacities of the individual, but also the overall mental interaction with the text being listened to. In the listening comprehension process, not only cognition, affective and motivational processes are involved, but also the recipient’s personality. Nevertheless, the study of connections between personality characteristics and listening comprehension skills is one of the few researched questions in the professional literature. Knowledge in this area can help educators to create optimal cognitive and personality prerequisites for students through their actions for effective reception of the text being listened to.

EMPIRICAL RESEARCH

Research Aim

In our research, we examine the importance of novelty in the educational process of listening comprehension or the importance of openness to tolerate new situations, new vocabulary, new grammar in the text for listening comprehension in the English language. We determine the cognitive-personality variable tolerance of novelty in the context of the receptive skill listening comprehension in the teaching of professional English. We are interested in the extent to which the tolerance of novelty is effective in understanding the text heard in the educational process.

Using quantitative research tools, we determine the difference in listening comprehension performance between groups with different levels of tolerance of novelty.

The objective of the research is to ascertain the extent of the influence of the novelty factor on listening comprehension.

Considering these variables, we define sub-aims:

- to find out to what extent the effect of the novelty factor manifests itself in the process of acquiring listening comprehension in individuals with a high degree of novelty tolerance.
- to find out to what extent the effect of the novelty factor manifests itself in the process of acquiring listening comprehension in individuals with an average degree of novelty tolerance.
- to find out to what extent the effect of the novelty factor manifests itself in the process of acquiring listening comprehension skills in individuals exhibiting a low level of tolerance of novelty.

Hypothesis

Considering the aim of the research, we define the following research hypotheses:

- H1: There is a significant difference in listening performance between individuals with high and average tolerance of novelty.
- H2: There is a significant difference in listening performance between individuals with high and low tolerance of novelty.
- H3: There is a significant difference in listening performance between individuals with average and low tolerance of novelty.

Research Sample

The selection of the research sample was realised through the method of available selection, while the main criterion was the study at the university in the study programme culture and tourism management. The research was carried out at the Faculty of Arts, Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra in cooperation with the Institute of Culture and Tourism Management, Culturology and Ethnology and the Department of Romance and German Studies. The research sample is represented by 154 students who participated in the research, of which there were 20 men and 134 women aged between 18 and 24 years. The assumed language skills of all respondents were at the B2 level. This level was stated according to entry test that students had to pass before they started studying at the university. Data collection was realised in September 2023. Research data was administered anonymously, without recording the names of respondents. Performance in tests and scales had no impact on the respondent's academic results.

Methods

The research methods used in the research were of a quantitative nature. Research data was collected using a performance test and a scale. The performance test in listening comprehension was represented by a performance didactic standardised test focused on listening comprehension in the English language at level B2 called Cambridge English Qualification B2 First with the designation D251/03 Sample Test, which serves as a freely available practice test in paper as well as digital form for the B2 First Certificate in English (FCE) exam belonging to the Cambridge ESOL exam group (abbreviation for English for speakers of other languages). This test is aimed at students who need to demonstrate that they can start working in an English-speaking environment, study at an intermediate level or live independently in an English-speaking country (Cambridge English, 2023). This test is designed for students who aim to demonstrate their ability to function in an English-speaking environment, pursue studies at an intermediate level, or live independently in an English-speaking country (Cambridge English, 2023). The listening comprehension test is the third part of the comprehensive material practicing all skills.

The listening comprehension test consisted of 4 parts, and the research participants had approximately 40 minutes to complete it. The respondents could potentially earn a maximum of 30 points. Table 1 shows the structure of the performance test. This table represents an identical copy of table published in the publication of Cambridge English *B2 First. Handbook for teachers for exams* (2023, p. 52).

Figure 1
Listening tasks overview

PART	NUMBER OF QUESTIONS	NUMBER OF MARKS	TASK TYPES	FOCUS	FORMAT
1	8	8	Multiple choice	The focus is on genre, identifying speaker feeling, attitude, topic, opinion, purpose, agreement between speakers, gist and detail.	A series of short unrelated extracts, of approximately 30 seconds each, from monologues or exchanges between interacting speakers. There is one multiple-choice question per text, each with three options.
2	10	10	Sentence completion	The focus is on detail, identifying specific information and stated opinion.	A monologue lasting 3–4 minutes. Candidates are required to complete the sentences with information heard on the recording.
3	5	5	Multiple matching	The focus is on identifying speaker feeling, attitude, detail, gist and opinion.	Five short related monologues of approximately 30 seconds each. There are five questions which require the selection of the correct option from a list of eight.
4	7	7	Multiple choice	The focus is on identifying opinion, attitude, detail, gist, main idea and specific information.	An interview or exchange between two speakers and lasting 3–4 minutes. There are seven 3-option multiple-choice questions.
TOTAL	30	30			

Source. Cambridge English, 2023, p. 52.

The degree of tolerance of novelty in the participants was determined using the TAS scale (Tolerance of Ambiguity Scale) (Budner, 1962). The scale of TA consists of 16 items (statements), while for each item respondents can mark one of the numbers on the Likert scale from 1 to 7. Each number represents a verbal expression representing the attitude to the given statement (1 = completely agree, 2 = agree, 3 = rather agree, 4 = have no opinion, 5 = rather disagree, 6 = disagree, 7 = completely disagree). To reveal the main source of intolerance or tolerance, we can divide the individual items on the scale into three subscales—tolerance of novelty, complexity and insolubility. The tolerance of novelty subscale is represented by items No. 2, 9, 11 and 13. Higher scores on individual scales indicate higher intolerance of ambiguity (Budner, 1962). To facilitate and simplify data collection, we used the MS Forms, which means that the respondents filled out the scale in digital form.

Based on the raw scores on the tolerance of novelty scale, the respondents were divided into three groups. Individuals with the lowest scores (range from 4 to 13 points) formed the first group with a high degree of tolerance of novelty (low values on the scale indicate high tolerance). The second group consisted of respondents with average

tolerance of novelty scores (range from 14 to 18 points). The third group consisted of respondents with the highest score (range from 19 to 28 points), which indicated a low tolerance of novelty.

Research data were processed and statistically evaluated using SPSS software. In accordance with the research hypotheses, descriptive statistics and independent samples t-test were used.

RESULTS

Descriptive statistics of the personality variable tolerance of novelty and the performance of the respondents in the listening test in the English are shown in Table 2. The average performance in the listening test is 19.52 points, while the results of the respondents ranged from 7 to 30 points. On the tolerance of novelty scale, our respondents scored an average of 15.58 points. Scores on this scale ranged from 4 to 23 points. Our sample was characterised by an average score in the middle range in both researched variables, in the case of the listening variable with slightly greater performance variability (std. deviation 6.043, kurtosis -.706).

Table 1

Descriptive statistics of the variables Tolerance of Novelty and Listening

	Novelty		Listening	
	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
Mean	15.58	.417	19.52	.689
95% Confidence Interval for Mean	Lower Bound	14.75	18.15	
	Upper Bound	16.42	20.89	
Median	15.00		20.00	
Variance	13.404		36.516	
Std. Deviation	3.661		6.043	
Minimum	4		7	
Maximum	23		30	
Range	19		23	
Skewness	-.284	.274	-.288	.274
Kurtosis	.231	.541	-.706	.541

Source. Own research.

In accordance with our research hypotheses, we further researched the difference in listening performance between groups of respondents in three tolerance of novelty bands (high, average, and low tolerance of novelty). We compared the average performance of individual groups in listening using independent samples T-test (Table 3 — 5).

Table 2*Independent samples T-test in Listening (Novelty group 1 and 2)*

Group Statistics														
	Novelty group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference								
						F	Sig.	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
Listening	Group 1	42	21.38	5.565	.859									
	Group 2	76	19.08	6.164	.707									
	Group 3	36	18.28	5.892	.982									
Levene's Test for Equality of Variances														
Equal var. Assumed						.148	.701	2.009	116	.047*	2.302	1.146	.033	4.571

Note. Statistical significance at the level $p = .05$ (*), $p = .01$ (**), $p = .001$ (***) .

Source. Own research.

Table 3*Independent samples T-test in Listening (Novelty group 1 and 3)*

Group Statistics														
	Novelty group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference								
						F	Sig.	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
Listening	Group 1	42	21.38	5.565	.859									
	Group 2	76	19.08	6.164	.707									
	Group 3	36	18.28	5.892	.982									
Levene's Test for Equality of Variances														
Equal var. Assumed						.086	.771	2.389	76	.019*	3.103	1.299	0.516	5.690

Note. Statistical significance at the level $p = .05$ (*), $p = .01$ (**), $p = .001$ (***) .

Source. Own research.

Table 4*Independent samples T-test in Listening (Novelty group 2 and 3)*

Group Statistics														
	Novelty group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference								
						F	Sig.	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
Listening	Group 1	42	21.38	5.565	.859									
	Group 2	76	19.08	6.164	.707									
	Group 3	36	18.28	5.892	.982									
Levene's Test for Equality of Variances														
Equal var. Assumed						.006	.940	.651	110	.516	.801	1.230	-1.636	3.239

Source. Own research.

A statistically significant difference in listening was confirmed between groups 1 and 2, that is, between respondents with a high and an average level of tolerance of novelty ($p = .047^*$). This means that students with a high level of tolerance for novelty significantly outperformed students with a moderate level of tolerance for novelty in listening comprehension. The difference in listening performance was also statistically significant between groups 1 and 3, that is, between respondents with high and low levels of tolerance of novelty ($p = .019^*$). The difference in listening performance between groups 2 and 3 (respondents with an average or low degree of tolerance of novelty) did not reach the level of statistical significance. The results of our research show that respondents with a high tolerance of novelty perform significantly better in listening in a foreign language than people with an average and low level of tolerance of novelty.

DISCUSSION

The effect of the tolerance of novelty factor in relation to the acquisition of listening comprehension is shown in our research in individuals with a high degree of tolerance of novelty. Tolerance of novelty can be interpreted as openness to new experiences and willingness to take risks in the process of understanding and acquiring a foreign language. We agree with Meihua Liu (2012), who points out that students with a higher tolerance for new and unfamiliar stimuli are more willing to experiment with new, alternative forms and language structures in a foreign language, thereby naturally developing receptive language skills and creativity in foreign language expression. Risk-takers can cope more effectively with possible errors in language expression (Dehbozorgi, 2012), experience less anxiety in the learning process, and we assume that they better tolerate imperfect understanding of a foreign language text read or listened to.

In our research, the theory about the optimal zone of tolerance of novelty for the development of language skills was not confirmed (El-Koumy, 2009; Gudykunst, 2005). The difference in listening efficiency was demonstrated in favour of the group with the highest degree of tolerance of novelty. It appears that a greater degree of tolerance of novelty creates better conditions for successful comprehension of the listening text. We relate this finding to the nature of the language skill of listening comprehension. The foreign language spoken is often unrepeatable, the input is sequential, quickly fleeting and harder to predict. In the process of acquiring listening skills, students are exposed to new stimuli in a short period of time. In contrast to reading, the listener cannot return to passages that are more difficult to understand and must listen to the speech without much interruption of attention. Tolerance of novelty can play an important role precisely in the efficient and prompt adaptation to rapidly changing communication situations and supports the process of flexible search for the most optimal cognitive schemes for understanding foreign language communication.

In our research, the effect of the tolerance of novelty factor was manifested in advanced students with language level B2. The limitation of our research is the exclusive focus on the B2 language proficiency level. In the future, we consider it important to examine the relationship between tolerance of novelty and performance in listening comprehension also at other levels of foreign language proficiency.

Our findings hold significant implications for pedagogical practice, suggesting that as language proficiency levels advance, there should be a focus on moving away from relying solely on familiar (literal) interpretations of meaning. Instead, there should be an emphasis on fostering a comprehensive understanding of the foreign language communication context and cultivating a creative, strategic, and multi-dimensional approach to perceiving foreign language texts (Judák et al., 2023; Stranovská, 2023). In further research, we would consider it necessary to develop and experimentally validate educational programmes focused on enhancing listening comprehension through techniques based on facilitating tolerance of ambiguity and novelty. We perceive pedagogical work with tolerance of novelty as effective, because this personality factor belongs to the relatively dynamic characteristics of students, which can be optimised with the help of the teacher's deliberate action and in this way simultaneously stimulate the cognitive processes of listening and understanding.

CONCLUSIONS

Developing language skills using the latest knowledge and techniques from the field of psycholinguistics belongs to the current trends in foreign language teaching. One inherent and innovative factor in teaching a foreign language is tolerance of novelty, which manifests the openness to accept new situations, new vocabulary, and new grammar in the text for listening comprehension. In our contribution, we examined the importance of the novelty factor in the educational process of listening comprehension. In listening comprehension in a foreign language at the B2 language level, students with a high level of tolerance for novelty significantly outperformed others with an average and low level of tolerance of novelty. The results of our research highlight the importance of fostering a comprehensive understanding of the foreign language communication context and cultivating a creative, strategic, and multi-dimensional approach to developing listening comprehension.

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