Teaching Listening

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Introduction

Listening is the language modality that is used most frequently.

Adults spend almost half their communication time listening, and students may receive as much as 90% of their in-school information through listening to instructors and to one another.

Often, however, language learners do not recognize the level of effort that goes into developing listening ability.
Introduction

Not all listening is the same; casual greetings, for example, require a different sort of listening capability than do academic lectures. Language learning requires intentional listening that employs strategies for identifying sounds and making meaning from them.
Introduction

Listening involves a sender (a person, radio, television), a message, and a receiver (the listener). Listeners often must process messages as they come, even if they are still processing what they have just heard, without backtracking or looking ahead.

In addition, listeners must cope with the sender’s choice of vocabulary, structure, and rate of delivery. The complexity of the listening process is magnified in second language contexts, where the receiver also has incomplete control of the language.
Introduction

Given the importance of listening in language learning and teaching, it is essential for language teachers to help their students become effective listeners. In the communicative approach to language teaching, this means modeling listening strategies and providing listening practice in authentic situations: those that learners are likely to encounter when they use the language outside the classroom.
Goals and Techniques for Teaching Listening

Instructors want to produce students who, even if they do not have complete control of the grammar or an extensive lexicon, can fend for themselves in communication situations. In the case of listening, this means producing students who can use listening strategies to maximize their comprehension of aural input, identify relevant and non-relevant information, and tolerate less than word-by-word comprehension.
Integrating Metacognitive Strategies

Before listening: Plan for the listening task

• Set a purpose or decide in advance what to listen for
• Decide if more linguistic or background knowledge is needed
• Determine whether to enter the text from the top down (attend to the overall meaning) or from the bottom up (focus on the words and phrases)
Integrating Metacognitive Strategies

During and after listening: Monitor comprehension

• Verify predictions and check for inaccurate guesses
• Decide what is and is not important to understand
• Listen/view again to check comprehension
• Ask for help
Integrating Metacognitive Strategies

After listening: Evaluate comprehension and strategy use

• Evaluate comprehension in a particular task or area
• Evaluate overall progress in listening and in particular types of listening tasks
• Decide if the strategies used were appropriate for the purpose and for the task
• Modify strategies if necessary
Using Authentic Materials and Situations

**One-Way Communication**

Materials:
- Radio and television programs
- Public address announcements (airports, train/bus stations, stores)
- Speeches and lectures
- Telephone customer service recordings
Using Authentic Materials and Situations

Procedure:
• Help students identify the listening goal: to obtain specific information; to decide whether to continue listening; to understand most or all of the message
• Help students outline predictable sequences in which information may be presented: who-what-when-where (news stories); who-flight number-arriving/departing-gate number (airport announcements); "for [function], press [number]" (telephone recordings)
• Help students identify key words/phrases to listen for
Using Authentic Materials and Situations

Two-Way Communication

In authentic two-way communication, the listener focuses on the speaker's meaning rather than the speaker's language. The focus shifts to language only when meaning is not clear. Note the difference between the teacher as teacher and the teacher as authentic listener in the dialogues in the popup screens.
Strategies for Developing Listening Skills

Top-down strategies are listener based; the listener taps into background knowledge of the topic, the situation or context, the type of text, and the language. This background knowledge activates a set of expectations that help the listener to interpret what is heard and anticipate what will come next.

Top-down strategies include:
- listening for the main idea
- predicting
- drawing inferences
- summarizing
Strategies for Developing Listening Skills

**Bottom-up strategies** are text based; the listener relies on the language in the message, that is, the combination of sounds, words, and grammar that creates meaning.

Bottom-up strategies include
- listening for specific details
- recognizing cognates
- recognizing word-order patterns
Strategies for Developing Listening Skills

*Listening for Meaning*
To extract meaning from a listening text, students need to follow four basic steps:

• Figure out the purpose for listening. Activate background knowledge of the topic in order to predict or anticipate content and identify appropriate listening strategies.

• Attend to the parts of the listening input that are relevant to the identified purpose and ignore the rest. This selectivity enables students to focus on specific items in the input and reduces the amount of information they have to hold in short-term memory in order to recognize it.
Strategies for Developing Listening Skills

• Select top-down and bottom-up strategies that are appropriate to the listening task and use them flexibly and interactively. Students' comprehension improves and their confidence increases when they use top-down and bottom-up strategies simultaneously to construct meaning.

• Check comprehension while listening and when the listening task is over. Monitoring comprehension helps students detect inconsistencies and comprehension failures, directing them to use alternate strategies.
Developing Listening Activities

Define the activity's instructional goal and type of response.
1. Identification: Recognizing or discriminating specific aspects of the message, such as sounds, categories of words, morphological distinctions
2. Orientation: Determining the major facts about a message, such as topic, text type, setting
   A. Main idea comprehension: Identifying the higher-order ideas
   B. Detail comprehension: Identifying supporting details
   C. Replication: Reproducing the message orally or in writing
Developing Listening Activities

Check the level of difficulty of the listening text.

1. How is the information organized?
2. Does the story line, narrative, or instruction conform to familiar expectations?
3. How familiar are the students with the topic?
4. Does the text contain redundancy?
5. Does the text involve multiple individuals and objects?
6. Are they clearly differentiated?
7. Does the text offer visual support to aid in the interpretation of what the listeners hear?
Developing Listening Activities

Use pre-listening activities to prepare students for what they are going to hear or view.

1. assess students' background knowledge of the topic and linguistic content of the text
2. provide students with the background knowledge necessary for their comprehension of the listening passage or activate the existing knowledge that the students possess
3. clarify any cultural information which may be necessary to comprehend the passage make students aware of the type of text they will be listening to, the role they will play, and the purpose(s) for which they will be listening
Developing Listening Activities

Use pre-listening activities to prepare students for what they are going to hear or view.
4. provide opportunities for group or collaborative work and for background reading or class discussion activities
Developing Listening Activities

Use pre-listening activities to prepare students for what they are going to hear or view.

6. Sample pre-listening activities:
A. looking at pictures, maps, diagrams, or graphs
B. reviewing vocabulary or grammatical structures
C. reading something relevant
D. constructing semantic webs (a graphic arrangement of concepts or words showing how they are related)
E. predicting the content of the listening text
F. going over the directions or instructions for the activity
G. doing guided practice
Developing Listening Activities

Match while-listening activities to the instructional goal, the listening purpose, and students' proficiency level.

1. If students are to complete a written task during or immediately after listening, allow them to read through it before listening.
2. Keep writing to a minimum during listening.
3. Organize activities so that they guide listeners through the text.
4. Use questions to focus students' attention on the elements of the text crucial to comprehension of the whole.
5. Use predicting to encourage students to monitor their comprehension as they listen.
Developing Listening Activities

Match while-listening activities to the instructional goal, the listening purpose, and students' proficiency level.

5. Give immediate feedback whenever possible.
   Encourage students to examine how or why their responses were incorrect.

Sample while-listening activities
A. listening with visuals
B. filling in graphs and charts
C. following a route on a map
D. checking off items in a list
E. listening for the gist
F. searching for specific clues to meaning
G. completing cloze (fill-in) exercises
H. distinguishing between formal and informal registers
Using Textbook Listening Activities

Integrating Listening Strategies With Textbook Audio and Video

1. Plan for listening/viewing
2. Preview the tape/video
3. Listen/view intensively section by section.
4. Monitor your comprehension
5. Evaluate your listening comprehension progress
Assessing Listening Proficiency

Use post-listening activities to check comprehension, evaluate listening skills and use of listening strategies, and extend the knowledge gained to other contexts.

It must have a purpose other than assessment
It must require students to demonstrate their level of listening comprehension by completing some task.
To develop authentic assessment activities, consider the type of response that listening to a particular selection would elicit in a non-classroom situation.
The End of this Talk
Based on the teaching material that you have, please design the pre-listening, while-listening, after-listening activities if you would teach these two units.

You must clearly state your activities for the readers to understand.