Active Listening

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Preface

About the series

Research and Resources in Language Teaching is a ground-breaking series whose aim is to integrate the latest research in language teaching and learning with innovative classroom practice. The books are written by a partnership of writers, who combine research and materials writing skills and experience. Books in the series offer accessible accounts of current research on a particular topic, linked to a wide range of practical and immediately useable classroom activities. Using the series, language educators will be able both to connect research findings directly to their everyday practice through imaginative and practical communicative tasks and to realise the research potential of such tasks in the classroom. We believe the series represents a new departure in language education publishing, bringing together the twin perspectives of research and materials writing, illustrating how research and practice can be combined to provide practical and useable activities for classroom teachers and at the same time encouraging researchers to draw on a body of activities that can guide further research.

About the books

All the books in the series follow the same organisational principle:

Part I: From Research to Implications

Part I provides an account of current research on the topic in question and outlines its implications for classroom practice.

Part II: From Implications to Application

Part II focuses on transforming research outcomes into classroom practice by means of practical, immediately useable activities. Short introductions signpost the path from research into practice.

Part III: From Application to Implementation

Part III contains methodological suggestions for how the activities in Part II could be used in the classroom, for example, different ways in which they could be integrated into the syllabus and applied to different teaching contexts.

Part IV: From Implementation to Research

Part IV returns to research with suggestions for professional development projects and action research, often directly based on the materials in the book. Each book as a whole thus completes the cycle: research into practice and practice back into research.

About this book

Listening is now rightfully considered to be the foundation of language acquisition and communication ability. Given the importance of teaching listening in any language course, this volume brings together the most relevant research and most vital insights on listening processes and develops an innovative and engaging sequence of listening activities. The authors identify one key concept from the research, Active Listening, to be a guiding principle for educators in their design of listening activities and guidance in the most effective ways of employing them. Based on the most vital strands of listening and learning research, Active Listening is analysed in terms of five 'frames': affective, top down, bottom up, interactive and autonomous. The presentation of each frame is organised around insights into how listening ability is acquired and can best be taught. The book offers a variety of innovative and motivating classroom activities within each of these frames, together with guidance on adapting the activities to other contexts and integrating them into an overall curriculum. Readers are offered guidelines for action research projects and ideas for sharing observations and recommendations with other practitioners.

Finally, as an added feature, sample audio recordings are also provided for selected activities, available online at the series website **www.routledge.com/ 9781408296851**

We hope that you will find the series exciting and above all valuable to your practice and research in language education!

Chris Candlin (Series General Adviser) and
Jill Hadfield (Series Editor)

Author acknowledgments

Publisher's acknowledgements

Part I
From Research to Implications

Theoretical framework

Teachers, instructional designers and language researchers have become increasingly interested in listening. The cumulative research on listening and the growing array of listening materials available to language learners have provided us with an expanding wealth of resources, delivered in innovative technologies. At the same time, this current abundance has created a need for a fresh form of guidance. More than ever, practitioners are in need of clear principles to guide interpretation of research and to inform selection and use of appropriate resources.

We have found that one robust concept, **active listening**, can guide practitioners in identifying key principles in listening research and applying these principles in a methodical way. By active listening we are extending the connotation of 'being animated when you listen'. We are referring to a broader range of cognitive and emotional activity that could be described as 'engaged processing'.

The purpose of this introductory section is to bring together relevant research that has contributed to our understanding of this core concept of active listening and to draw key implications for practice. We will organise the range of listening research and implications into five interactive frameworks, each with an overriding focus:

Affective Frame – focus on enhancing the listener's personal motivation and involvement.

Top Down Frame – focus on deepening the understanding of ideas and making stronger interpretations.

Bottom Up Frame – focus on perceiving sounds, recognising words and syntactic structures more accurately.

Interactive Frame – focus on building cooperation, collaboration and interdependence during the listening process.

Autonomous Frame – focus on developing effective listening and learning strategies.

Each framework provides a unique perspective on the listening process as well as insights into how listening is learned and can be taught. By understanding the complementary character of these different perspectives, we can appreciate that listening development requires integration of multiple frameworks.

The five frames

Affective Frame

Some students sit silently in the classroom and feel overwhelmed and even oppressed by the listening activities the teacher presents. Because of the anxiety they feel, they tune out, have little or no engagement, perform poorly – and then *feel even worse*! Other students feel activated whenever there is a listening activity, welcoming the engagement and the challenge. They have no trouble tuning in, doing their best, and they usually make progress in listening with seemingly minimal effort.

These two types of students represent the poles of affective involvement in listening. What makes someone *want* to listen? What makes someone else *avoid* listening? Research in the Affective Frame addresses this issue and other issues related to motivation and personal engagement. Research in this framework situates the listener as the focal point of communication, an individual with affective needs and reactions, with a motivation for listening.

Key research findings

1. **The impact of motivation**
    Motivation is one of the key factors influencing the rate and success of second language (L2) learning and the level of engagement a learner is willing to undertake. Strong motivation can even compensate for weaknesses in language aptitude and for a scarcity of learning opportunities. We all know stories of amazing learners, like Mawi Asgedom, the Ethiopian refugee turned motivational speaker, who overcame daunting life circumstances and found a way to acquire a second language at the highest level, against all odds. Motivation is a cognitive force that allows the learner to maintain attention and focus. (Asgedom refers to his own motivation as a kind of 'mental karate' that provides him with a means to cut through distractions.) As a kind of fuel in the learning engine, motivation has been shown to amplify intensity of effort, intellectual curiosity and self-confidence (Aragao, 2011). Increases in motivation have also been shown to defuse anxiety and aversion to risk-taking, two factors that tend to impede language acquisition (Gardner *et al.*, 1997).

2. **The importance of the instructor**
    We have all had teachers in various subjects who have helped us 'come out of our shells' through the force of their personality, their passion for their subject, or the way they invited us to approach learning. The influence can be short-term, assisting the learner to perform better in a

specific task, or long-term, leading the learner to make strategic changes to their learning style (Williams and Burden, 1999). Classroom studies have shown that learning outcomes can indeed be influenced by several 'pedagogic agents', factors that are under the control of the instructor (Ko, 2010). One set of factors is course-specific – decisions about the syllabus, teaching materials, teaching methods, learning tasks (Ahmed, 2009). Another set of factors is teacher-specific performance – ways of showing enthusiasm for learning, ways of giving feedback, ways of building relationships with students, ways of structuring learning activities that enhance group cohesion and group support (Imai, 2010).

3. **The value of goal orientation**
   Tasks pitched at the right level – not too difficult and not too easy – often lead to active engagement. Appropriately challenging tasks are likely to activate optimal levels of both emotion and cognition (Swain, 2010). Success with appropriate challenges also fuels 'internal competition' and expectations of further success, and helps learners to understand goal orientations and actively participate in goal-setting (Guilloteaux, 2007; Guilloteaux and Dörnyei, 2008). When learners understand and participate in content selection and learning goals, they will exert additional attention, effort and persistence towards achieving the goals (Williams, Burden and Lanvers, 2002.) This cyclic relationship of motivation and effort has come to be known as the **active learner hypothesis** (Oxford, 2010). Goal-oriented learners in any field, not only language learning, tend to experience an absorption that psychologists call 'flow', a deeply focused immersion in learning that contributes to a higher level of performance (Csikszentmihalyi, 2002).

4. **The effect of learner awareness**
   Only truly motivated learners will be willing to face the long-term challenges involved in becoming a competent L2 speaker and listener – challenges that require a strong sense of resilience. Researchers have found that an entry point into exploring and developing a success-oriented attitude is the notion of self-awareness and bicultural identity. As learners aspire towards a positive bicultural identity, their motivation becomes a powerful force for sustaining effort in and enthusiasm for language learning (Dörnyei and Hadfield, 2013; Lamb, 2004). Many language educators advocate exploring issues of identity and social persona as the students become active users of the L2 (Norton, 2010; Morgan and Clarke, 2011). As a student develops this positive identity, he or she is much more amenable to considering new strategies – conscious ways of improving one's ability in the L2 (O'Malley and Chamot, 1990; Oxford,

2010). Meta-cognition – ways of thinking about how to learn more productively and experimenting with deliberately using new strategies – can then become a vital part of the listening instruction (Vandergrift and Goh, 2012; Rost, 2011).

5. **The power of learning styles**
   Author Barbara Prashnig has argued that people of all ages can learn virtually anything if allowed to do it through their own unique styles, their own personal strengths (Prashnig, 1998; 2006). Many L2 researchers and language educators have embraced this notion, especially given the diversity of students who undertake L2 learning. Howard Gardner's seminal work in the early 1990s established that individuals possess different kinds of intelligence and, therefore, learn, remember, perform, and *understand* in different ways (Gardner, 1991). Several distinct learning styles have been identified: linguistic (verbal), logical-mathematic, auditory (musical), kinaesthetic (tactile), visual (spatial), interpersonal (social) and intrapersonal. (Two others – naturalistic and existential/preferential – are sometimes included.) Gardner's model is a much more accessible reformulation of earlier models of cognitive learning styles, such as the Myers-Briggs Personality Inventory (Myers, 1980) and the Kolb Learning Style Inventory (Kolb, 2006; 1985). In Gardner's framework, each style involves a fundamentally different type of interaction with input (Jones *et al.*, 2009). For listening instruction, it has been proposed that engaging in multiple processing styles and consciously departing from an emphasis solely on the 'traditional' learning styles (verbal and mathematical) may have a stimulating effect on students, particularly those who have never experienced success with language learning (Lightbown and Spada, 1999). For example, numerous educators contend that kinaesthetic learning can be transformative for many students, assisting them in engaging their emotions in the learning process; kinaesthetic learning is seen as including learning through humour and laughter (which evokes positive chemical changes in the brain), drama and creative movement (Martin, 2007; Taylor, 2001; Bell, 2009).

Implications

1. Stimulating the learner's motivation is essential in promoting active listening. Active listening is triggered by affect: how the listener feels about the listening encounter, his or her level of confidence or anxiety about making an effort to listen.

2. The instructor's expertise and personal and professional qualities are vital for creating enthusiasm for learning. Selecting engaging tasks will

promote active listening: designing motivating learning tasks, generating enthusiasm towards learning, building positive relationships with students, rewarding active listening attitudes and behaviours, nurturing group support among students.

3. Offering learners choices in goal-setting and presenting appropriate challenges are likely to increase the level of motivation (additional attention, effort and persistence) required to become a proficient listener.

4. Developing learner awareness concerning the nature of language learning, and including explicit listening strategy training, is likely to improve learners' participation and increase their overall motivation for learning.

5. Providing learners with opportunities to experiment with and integrate different processing styles is likely to lead to greater motivation, more affective involvement, and better learning results.

Top Down Frame

Many students get bogged down when they are listening for an extended period, and quickly become confused and lose the train of ideas in a conversation, extended monologue or lecture. Even though they are motivated and trying hard, they have trouble grasping the main ideas and recall only muddled fragments of what they heard. Other students, even with minimal proficiency, seem to be able to latch onto the main ideas, get the point quickly, and find some personal relevance in what they have heard.

These two types of learners represent different ends of the spectrum in terms of top down processing ability. What is it that allows some listeners to tune into and recall the overall structure of what they heard, while others tend to get lost and recall only scattered words and phrases? Research in the Top Down Frame addresses this type of disparity among learners. This framework places ideas at the centre of communication, and views the listener as a problem-senser and problem-solver, obtaining cues about ideas that a speaker presents. Using interpretation of these cues, the listener then actively constructs meaning.

Key research findings

1. **The role of attention in comprehension**
   Comprehension is a complex process that involves an interaction of attention, short-term memory formation and long-term memory retrieval, all of which will be subject to individual differences. It is well-established

that when two people listen to an identical source (such as a news story) even in their first language (L1), they may vary widely in what they attend to (Perfetti and Lesgold, 1977), how efficiently they employ short-term memory (Wen and Skehan, 2011), what is relevant to their comprehension goals (Lovett *et al.*, 1999) and how accurately and completely they recall information (Miyake and Shah, 1999). One key processing difference, for example, is that some people naturally tend to pay attention to (and therefore encode in memory) the overall conceptual structure of a text as they listen, while others focus on main themes and major ideas, and still others focus on individual facts or interesting details (Hicks *et al.*, 2005). Because attention is the trigger for learning, and attention span is a predictor of learning successes, aiding students in developing attention span is seen as a vital aspect of instruction (Robinson, 2012; Juffs and Harrington, 2011).

2. **The employment of background knowledge in comprehension**
   Background knowledge is perhaps the most significant concept relating to listening comprehension. All listeners vary in their background knowledge of a topic and invoke differing images for all of the lexical concepts they encounter in a text (Gernsbacher and Kaschak, 2003; Rost, 1990; 2006). Individual differences in accessing background knowledge (what is already known prior to listening) and encoding (what happens cognitively at the time of comprehension) are important in predicting the relative success of learners in acquiring a second language (Bransford, 2003; Johnson *et al.*, 2012). In order for understanding to take place, a listener must find common ground with the speaker of the text. Technically, this refers to sharing similar **activation spaces** in memory, a kind of mutual cognitive model (Haynes *et al.*, 2005; Levinson, 1996). Without this shared background knowledge, there cannot be adequate understanding (Binder *et al.*, 2009; Bowe and Martin, 2007; Poldrack *et al.*, 2009). When communicating in their L1, speakers and listeners depend on activation of similar cognitive models of specific concepts, which are called **prototypes** (Rosch *et al.*, 2004). For example, shared prototypes of what we understand by 'a silly idea', 'a troubled childhood', or 'a creepy boss' may allow a speaker and listener of English as an L1 to communicate efficiently and empathically. However, when L2 listeners cannot rely on common prototypes or shared background knowledge with L1 speakers, they will struggle. L2 users need to construct new **neural pathways** to be effective listeners: to understand new concepts in the L2, to find interest in what L1 speakers are talking about, and to empathise with their emotional states (Haynes and Rees, 2005; Churchland, 2006; Alptekin, 2002; Benet-Martínez and Lee, 2009).

3. **The effect of pre-listening tasks**
   Comprehension is possible only when a degree of expectation is present before listening. It is now accepted that comprehension is fundamentally a matter of understanding context and therefore expecting meaning, rather than waiting for meaning to emerge (Ross, 1975; Tannen, 1993.) It is also established that cognitive expectations ('schemata') that are activated prior to listening significantly influence what is understood and how well it will be remembered (Bartlett, 1932; Chafe, 1977; Rumelhart, 1980; Lustig *et al.*, 2001). Several particular types of activating expectations are known to be assistive in comprehension and retention: lexical priming (previewing concepts and key words in advance) (Chang, 2007), visual priming (previewing images related to the input) (Ginther, 2002), pre-listening questions (prompts about what will be asked while you listen or after you listen) (Graesser and Person, 1994), and advance organisers (previewing the overall rhetorical organisation) (Herron *et al.*, 1995; Chang and Read, 2007).

4. **The benefit of post-listening tasks**
   While pre-listening activity influences comprehension, activities the listener undertakes during and after listening will significantly influence retention. It is known that, in many conditions, active tasks while listening have an additive effect on processing of input; productive tasks provide a more potent encoding effect. Additional positive effects, such as improved recall, are observed when active while-listening tasks such as note-taking, are paired with post-listening tasks (Armbruster, 2000). In particular, the most effective post-listening tasks seem to be those that encourage interactive review (such as reviewing a script or a set of notes) (Carrell *et al.*, 2002; Kiewra *et al.*, 1995) and **appropriation** of the input (such as doing further research and giving a presentation on a related topic) (Donato, 2004; Thornbury, 2002).

5. **The multi-modal nature of language processing**
   We often think of listening as involving only the aural channel, but nearly all listening involves attention to signals in multiple channels. In live face-to-face communication as in multimedia text processing, the listener must attend to multiple layers of input, including the verbal system (written, auditory and articulatory verbal codes), the non-verbal system (visual and symbolic content), and the physical context (including people and objects referred to) (Cross, 2011; Gruba, 2006). In actual listening then, the listener processes large amounts of information simultaneously and makes complex configurations of mental representations while listening (Paivio, 2007). From this integration of aural and visual input

(some of which may be confusing) and cognitive input (what the listener already knows), the listener attempts to construct meaning (Hymes, 1964; 2009). Some researchers propose new models for understanding multimedia processing, involving a 'dynamic image schema' that provides the listener with additional means of organising and analysing information (Qiu and Huang, 2012). Revisiting the act of listening from this multimodal perspective entails new systems of understanding meaning that extend beyond language only, and systems of instruction that integrate multiple modes of processing (Cope and Kalantzis, 2012; Anstey and Bull, 2006).

Implications

1. Giving learners opportunities to focus on ideas, rather than simply on language, and focusing on building comprehension of complex ideas is central to listening development.

2. Developing a curiosity about new ideas and expressions in the L2 is an important aspect of active listening. Listening activities that promote **mediation** (with the learner's ideas in the L1) and appropriation add to the listener's strategies for understanding challenging input.

3. Pre-listening is an essential platform for listening development. Activities involving activation of images, concepts and organisation structures before listening are likely to be effective at promoting top down processing.

4. Post-listening is a vital aspect of listening development, particularly for reviewing listening strategies, for developing memory and for enhancing appropriation of content and skills.

5. Listening involves paying attention to multiple channels, not only the oral channel, so it is useful to highlight all sources of knowledge with which we construct meaning. Providing learners with controls over multiple input channels (such as subtitles on/off) helps them isolate sources of information as they listen.

Bottom Up Frame

Some students in the class may appear to be natural communicators – they speak fluently and they seem to tune in to others easily. It seems that they are listening very well – *until* someone checks what they actually heard. They may be mishearing key words and completely missing or ignoring

complex grammatical phrases. Although they are managing to get by through compensating with their top down listening ability, they are suffering at some level from a lack of bottom up processing skills.

Is it possible to teach this type of student how to pick up on more of what is actually spoken, to hear the language more completely and more accurately? Understanding of research in what we call the Bottom Up Frame can certainly help in formulating an approach. This framework focuses on the language that is used during the process of communication, the precise audio signals that are available to the listener and how they are perceived and decoded.

Key research findings

1. **Attention lapses during perception**
   A major cause of difficulty in second language listening is due to attention failures when an unfamiliar sound sequence is perceived. The attempt to process unfamiliar or unexpected sounds produces what is known in neurolinguistics as a P-400 effect, a temporary processing lapse in the auditory cortex (Dien *et al.*, 2010). (This processing 'blip' typically occurs about 400 milliseconds after an unfamiliar sound is perceived, hence the name.) Encountering and recovering from frequent lapses of this nature puts greater stress on the listener, and often leads to communication breakdowns (Rost, 2006), to debilitating effects on motivation to continue listening (Graham, 2006), and to an undue reliance on inferencing processes (Field, 1998). To counter these perceptual lapses, it is essential that the L2 listener becomes familiar with the **phonemes**, **intonation patterns**, and the **phonotactic system** of the L2. For children learning a second language, this process of familiarisation tends to progress without problems as the child learns to differentiate L1 and L2 phonemes accurately from the 'puddles of sound' in the environment (Monaghan and Christiansen, 2010; Singleton and Ryan, 2004; Kraus, 1999). However, for the adolescent or adult L2 learner, the process of acquiring the L2 phonology is typically quite problematic. Until the L2 learner begins perceiving the sounds of L2 accurately, the learner's L1 'intrudes' in the perception process. As a result, the learner 'attenuates' incoming sounds, effectively hearing the closest sound in his or her L1 instead of the actual uttered sounds of the L2 (Cutler, 2011; Cross, 2009). Because this perceptual constraint is an evolutionary feature of the human auditory system (we are supposed to identify with one 'tribe' by the time of adolescence), the learner must actively retrain the auditory cortex to prevent 'intrusion' of the L1 (Cutler, 2011; Hasan, 2000).

2. **Adjusting to fast speech phenomena**
   Speech rate is a common problem for L2 listeners. L1 listeners' compre-hension is typically unaffected by speeds of up to 250 words per minute, whereas even advanced L2 listeners typically reach optimal comprehen-sion at 130 words per minute (Buck, 2001). Difficulties occur not so much because of speed itself, but because the L2 listener is not prepared for **fast speech phenomena**. Even at normal speaking rates (about 180 words per minute), 'fast speech' (or connected speech) phenomena occur continuously (and relentlessly for the L2 listener). Consonant sounds are systematically **assimilated** – co-articulated or fused (and sometimes **elided** entirely) – rather than individually articulated. For instance, when you say the phrase 'fast speech', you are likely to assimilate the consonant cluster in the middle and just say something like 'faspeech'. Vowel sounds are systematically reduced – formed in central rather than peripheral areas of the mouth. For instance, when you say the word 'independent' in normal speech, you are likely to 'reduce' the first 'e' sound and the final 'e' sound (in unstressed syllables) to a central 'schwa' sound. When you grow up hearing a language, you learn to decode these differences automatically. However, for L2 learners, this 'automated' process is anything but auto-matic! It is now known that L2 learners tend to use the rhythmic system from their L1 to decode L2 speech. This strategy, except with very closely related languages, is generally counterproductive, and leads to faulty word recognition and grammatical parsing (Broersma and Cutler, 2008; Cutler, 2012; Indefrey and Cutler, 2004; Altenberg, 2005).

3. **The need for automatic word recognition**
   Word recognition is the essential operation in bottom up processing. L2 learners typically may know a word in isolation, but cannot recognise it in connected speech. For example, a learner may clearly know lexical items like *vegetable* or *comfortable* or *first of all*, but in connected speech, may hear 'vech tipple', 'come to Paul' or 'festival'. A major aspect of bottom up listening training is coming to recognise words automatically (without conscious attention or backtracking). In order to facilitate **automatic word recognition**, L2 learners need multiple exposures to the same vocabulary items (an advantage of 'narrow viewing' in the same genre), multi-channel exposures (audio and text), and **spaced repetitions** (encountering the word at regular intervals). While various types of practice aid learners in acquisition, research shows that a key to increasing recognition of vocabulary is in intensifying the amount of engagement while listening (Schmitt, 2010; Nation, 2008; Segalowitz, 2008; DeKeyser, 2009; Bialystok amd Craik, 2010; Sydorenko, 2010; Rodgers and Webb, 2011).

4. **The supportive role of parsing in speech recognition**
   Parsing speech (assigning words and phrases in terms of grammatical relationships) is a key part of bottom up processing. Many grammar signals may be elided in speech, so the listener has to anticipate and fill in much of the grammar to keep up with the speaker. Because of the importance of grammar, some teacher trainers advocate a **grammar noticing approach** to supplement listening instruction (VanPatten *et al.*, 2009). A few different tacks have been researched. Aural training that employs enriched input (highlighting target structures) or processing instruction (using form-focused tasks) has been shown to be effective for increasing awareness of grammar while listening (Field, 2008; Rost, 2006; De Jong, 2005; Wilson, 2003).

5. **The integration of linguistic and paralinguistic signals**
   Decoding speech involves more than recognising sounds and words. **Paralinguistic signals** (the sounds that ride on top of the words) contribute to the overall signal that is produced by the speaker (Ohala, 1996; Brazil, 1995). This level of speech can modify and amplify potential meaning. For example, it can provide cues about emotion (the speaker's attitude towards topic and specific words), salience (relative importance of new information), connections (relationships between words and phrases) and staging (intonational and melodic patterns to indicate desired effects on the listener) (Cheng *et al.*, 2005; Eckert and McConnell-Ginet, 2003).

Implications

1. Learning to hear the new sounds and sound patterns in an L2 is essential for listening, but requires sustained effort and motivation, particularly for adult learners. Targeted instruction in L2 sound perception is essential.

2. To become proficient listeners, L2 learners need to become comfortable with fast speech. Active training in the sounds and sound patterns of the L2 (in regular, small doses) is necessary for all learners, particularly those who have learned the L2 first through reading.

3. Word recognition is the most important bottom up listening process. Listening instruction that focuses actively on word recognition will improve learners' overall listening ability.

4. Grammatical parsing is a key skill in listening. Listening instruction that includes grammatical processing, or noticing of grammatical forms, will be of value for most learners.

5. Actively attending to paralinguistic signals can assist learners with aural perception in the L2. Instruction that raises awareness of the role of paralinguistic signals will add to the learners' repertoire of listening strategies.

Interactive Frame

There are always some students in a class who have scored at the highest levels on reading and writing sections of proficiency exams but who struggle mightily with aural communication. Some may feel embarrassed at the gap between their reading and listening skills. They're reluctant to interact and to ask questions because their 'weakness' may be revealed. Because they don't interact willingly, they tend to get ignored, and get fewer opportunities to develop a much needed ability.

This type of issue is explored in what we call the Interactive Frame of listening research. This framework views the listener as a participant at the centre of communication. In this type of research, meaning is viewed as interactive, co-constructed between the listener and the speaker.

Key research findings

1. **Creation of learning opportunities**
   Affective involvement of the listener during an interaction is a key determinant of the quality of understanding he or she experiences (Ushioda, 2010). Affective involvement can be an antidote for anxiety and aversion to speaking. Listeners with greater involvement tend to be more motivated to participate, to be open, to feel more confident in their abilities, to reveal more of themselves, and thus have a more satisfying interaction and a more valuable learning experience (Yang, 1993; Aniero, 1990). On the other hand, listeners who perceive themselves as discounted or marginalised tend to adopt a low action orientation. This leads to greater perceived social distance with the speaker, which reduces motivation to interact (Villaume and Bodie, 2007; Ford *et al.*, 2002).

2. **Communication strategies and quality of interaction**
   The goal of active listening in an interaction is to develop a degree of interpersonal solidarity. This involves developing strategies to 'tune in' to the motivations of the speaker, to provide appropriate participation signals, and to actively guide the interaction towards a desired outcome. Various measures and scales have been developed in psychology to monitor communication strategies and listener strategies in interaction (Rost and Ross, 1991; Nakatani, 2010). These scales provide barometers

for acquisition of listening abilities in social, professional and therapeutic settings, and can be used as a means of feedback and assessment (Luoma, 2004; Ducasse and Brown, 2009).

3. **Listener response as central to interaction**
   One of the core skills in interactive listening is **backchannelling** – providing appropriate displays of comprehension, empathy and readiness for subsequent turns. It will include combinations of brief verbal and semi-verbal signals (*ahhs* and *hmms*, for example), laughs, chuckles and postural movements, such as nods. While all languages have some form of backchannelling, the style and frequency differs from culture to culture. Learning to backchannel using L2 norms can have a beneficial effect, in terms of perceptions of fluency and proficiency in L2 listeners. An important aspect of backchannelling is signalling when understanding has gone awry, and initiating some form of **repair** (White and Burgoon, 2006; Wolf, 2008; McCarthy, 2010; Moore, 2011; Chalhoub-Deville, 1995; Lazaraton, 2002.)

4. **Interaction and pushed output**
   Interaction plays a vital role in providing opportunities for negotiation of comprehensible input, an important channel for language acquisition (Gass and Mackey, 2006). (This position is known in second language acquisition research as the **interaction hypothesis** (Long, 1996)). Oral interaction tasks that present a need and opportunity for negotiation of meaning are an essential aspect of language development. Some interactive tasks also provide opportunities for **pushed output**. 'Modified output', speech that the learner modifies following feedback from a listener, 'pushes' learners to produce more accurate, appropriate, complex and comprehensible forms (Weinart, 1995; Krashen *et al.*, 1984; Swain, 1993). Swain has claimed that modified output benefits L2 development because 'learners need to be pushed to make use of their resources; they need to have their linguistic abilities stretched to their fullest; they need to reflect on their output and consider ways of modifying it to enhance comprehensibility, appropriateness and accuracy' (1993, pp. 160–1). Pushed output tasks, when joined with listening input, can be especially effective in 'forcing' learners to reconstruct ideas using precise vocabulary and grammatical structures (de la Fuente, 2002).

5. **Learner initiation of interaction**
   Research on classroom interaction has shown that there is a reflexive relationship between pedagogy and interaction in the L2 classroom. How the teacher interacts with students and how the students interact with

each other are foundational elements of instruction, particularly in classes emphasising development of oral communication. Indeed, it can be argued that all pedagogy is translated into interaction (Seedhouse, 2004). Analysis of classroom interaction can provide insights into how learners and teachers interpret the pedagogy, and lead the teacher towards making informed decisions about how to influence classroom discourse to promote learner-initiated interaction (Richards, 2006) and how best to utilise instructor feedback to promote learning (Lyster and Mori, 2006).

Implications

1. Stimulating interactive tasks can increase affective involvement while creating opportunities for listening development.

2. The main strategy in interactive listening is consciously creating solidarity with the speaker. Feedback on learners' use of listening strategies during interactions is likely to improve their proficiency.

3. Listener response is a vital communication skill. Backchannelling is the fundamental mode of listener response and should be practised, in its various forms, as part of listening instruction.

4. Interactive listening tasks are essential for language acquisition because they require negotiation of meaning and pushed output. Collaborative problem-solving tasks and input reconstruction tasks can promote this kind of development.

5. Classroom learning entails interaction: all pedagogy is realised through some form of interaction. By investigating the 'interactional architecture' of classroom conversations, teachers can make informed decisions on designing tasks to promote learner-initiated interaction.

Autonomous Frame

We have all seen some students soar in listening and communication skills – make quantum leaps during our course. Though we may want to attribute at least some of their success to our teaching, it is more often the case that these students are doing something valuable *outside of class* that is propelling them forward.

As important as classroom teaching is – for fuelling motivation, for scaffolding learning tasks, for developing learning strategies, for providing professional feedback – language learners are not likely to make substantial and sustained progress without independent learning *on their own*. The Autonomous Frame

of research is focused on independent learning. In particular, research in this framework is concerned with how learners come to be self-directed and productive in their independent learning activities.

Key research findings

1. **Necessity of supplemental learning opportunities**
   Autonomous listening is essential to language development, as language classrooms seldom offer sufficient listening opportunities for sustained progress. Different forms of hybrid learning – involving varying proportions of classroom and self-access instruction – have been compared. Particularly in EFL environments in which contact with live speakers of the target language is rare, autonomous online learning is an attractive option for developing listening ability. Autonomous learning outside the classroom appears to be most effective when the teacher provides monitoring and periodic assessment, as well as a means of actively integrating the two modes of learning (Little, 2008; Ushioda, 2009; Tong and Tong, 2010).

2. **Connecting to social contexts**
   Autonomous learning is not only concerned with finding more opportunities for learning, but with connecting to social contexts outside the classroom (Block, 2003; Firth and Wagner, 1997; Milne, 2007). The most basic application of this idea is identifying learning opportunities outside the classroom that connect with classroom tasks (Crabbe, 2007) and becoming aware of English-learning possibilities in the immediate environs (even in EFL contexts), what Lynch calls 'WOT' (the 'world out there') activities that serve as a springboard for classroom learning (Lynch, 2009). A deeper aspect of becoming autonomous involves becoming interdependent with speakers of the target language community (Toohey, 2000; Lynch, 2009). One aspect of community-based learning may be **service learning**, engaging students in meaningful service to their schools and communities. Through this kind of engagement, students not only learn more language in real-world settings, but also experience an authentic connection to people around them (Russell, 2007; Moser and Rogers, 2005).

3. **Integrating new technologies**
   New technologies have provided, and will continue to provide, increasing opportunities for autonomous listening outside of the classroom, for the integration of listening into multimodal learning and the development of multi-literacies (Goodwin-Jones, 2012; Cope and Kalantzis, 2012). Authentic materials incorporating listening (audio and video) have become increasingly accessible to learners. Research has established that

additive online-based listening instruction enhances students' listening ability (Romeo and Hubbard, 2010), and has a positive effect on their attitudes towards online language learning (Puakpong, 2008). Online forums, discussion groups and social networking have also enhanced opportunities for listening. One study has shown that listening behaviours account for almost three-quarters of the time learners spend in online networking activities. Cluster analysis has identified three distinct patterns of behaviour and indicates that online listening is a complex phenomenon and a substantial component of students' participation in online learning (Wise *et al.*, 2012; Choe, 2011).

4. **Developing instructor support in autonomous learning**
   Language advising is now part of the expanded role of the modern teacher. In addition to classroom teaching and coaching, instructors now are expected also to assist learners in finding learning paths outside the classroom. This role extends beyond recommending suitable learning resources outside of class, to counselling learners in creating their own learning goals (Mynard and Carson, 2012). Deciding on the appropriate amount of support (and more is *not* necessarily better) is a crucial aspect of planning for out-of-class learning: the key is in adjusting cognitive load so that learners have the optimal level of challenge (Ishikawa, 2012; Benson and Chik, 2010). For instance, there are varying views about the use of captioning and help menus, vocabulary glosses and translations when teaching with multimedia. One view is that the additional support will increase context, reduce cognitive load and improve comprehension (Clark *et al.*, 2006; Jones and Plass, 2002). A parallel view is that any support that allows the learner to keep listening is a valid tool (Rendaya and Farrell, 2011).

5. **Developing learning strategies**
   The development of learner strategy inventories and guides for the good language learner has helped teachers understand the possible paths for learners towards autonomous learning. In particular, teachers are learning how to promote **self-management strategies**: organising and planning your own learning, monitoring and managing your learning, evaluating the outcomes of your learning (Oxford, 2011). Learning strategies that are specific to listening are those that the learner consciously chooses in an effort at improving his or her planning, focusing attention, monitoring, evaluating, inferencing, elaborating, collaborating and reviewing (Vandergrift, 2011; Rost, 2011). (See Appendix 1 for a full list with examples.) It appears that learners who explore, develop and adopt learning strategies will often perform slightly better on specific listening tasks

(Lynch, 2009). Learners who consciously adopt strategies to improve also make more sustained progress towards overall proficiency (Vandergrift and Goh, 2012; Cross, 2009; White, 2008; Ushioda, 2008; Vandergrift and Tafaghodtari, 2010).

Implications

1. Autonomous listening is essential to sustained progress in listening. To maximise effectiveness, some form of teacher monitoring and assessment is necessary.

2. Out of class listening can help learners expand their identity as L2 users. Social context listening tasks that encourage planning, self-discovery and reflection provide students with the challenges and benefits of real-world learning.

3. New technologies and particularly internet technologies allow for individualisation of learning resources and tasks. Various support technologies enable learners to access a range of authentic sources and communities.

4. The instructor's role in autonomous learning is active, as is the student's role. Instructor tasks include planning, advising, mentoring, providing coaching and feedback.

5. Learner strategy instruction will enhance the learners' experience with autonomous listening. In particular, self-management strategies need to be promoted.

Summary

Part I has outlined key research strands that have informed the learning activities we present in Part II. We have organised the research into a set of five frames, each reflecting a particular aspect of listening:

Affective – focusing on **motivational processes**

Top Down – focusing on **inferential processes**

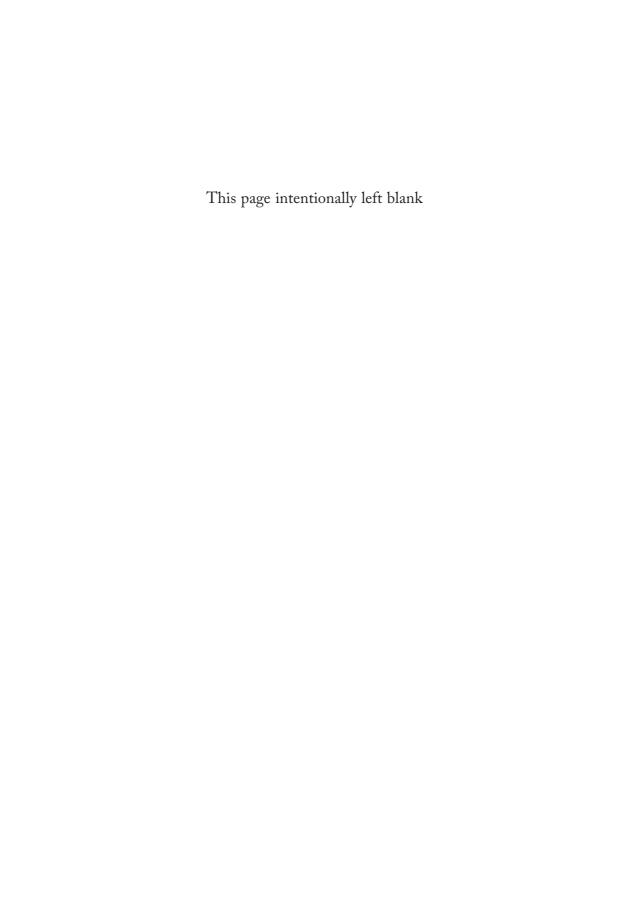Bottom Up – focusing on **perceptual processes**

Interactive – focusing on **interpersonal processes**

Autonomous – focusing on **strategic processes**

Because of the multi-dimensional nature of listening, we propose that *all five frameworks are of equal importance,* and *all five should be drawn upon*

in language instruction. You will find that there is an overlap in the research findings, learning principles and listening processes for each frame. For example, listening activities in all frames will draw upon motivational ideas in the Affective Frame, to some extent. Similarly, because top down and bottom up processes are complementary, you will notice a kind of synergy between these two types of activities in the Top Down and Bottom Up Frames. In a similar vein, because *all* instruction is realised as some form of interaction, you will observe aspects of the Interactive Frame throughout activities in the other frames. Finally, principles of the Autonomous Frame, especially the development and use of active listening strategies, apply to specific aspects of activities in all of the other frames. We have grouped particular activities in each of the frames to represent the kinds of activities that enable students to develop the focus of that frame.

Over all five frames, the development of listening strategies is important for progress. We define a listening strategy as a conscious attempt to improve one's listening comprehension or listening task performance. We have identified eight categories of active listening strategies: Planning, Directed Attention, Monitoring, Evaluating, Inferencing, Elaborating, Collaborating and Reviewing. By purposefully attempting to use particular strategies during the listening activities (we list target strategies for each activity in the Aims section), students can become more active – mentally and physically – and more engaged. We have included a separate table of active listening strategies in Appendix 1 as a reference.

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Part II
From Implications to Application

As we outlined in Part I, listening can be profitably researched from various perspectives. Each of these perspectives offers unique insight into the nature of listening and to the manner in which 'active listening' is developed.

We suggested five frameworks for applying principles of listening research to teaching:

Affective – focusing on motivational processes

Top Down – focusing on inferential processes

Bottom Up – focusing on perceptual processes

Interactive – focusing on interpersonal processes

Autonomous – focusing on strategic processes

Because of the multi-dimensional nature of listening, we propose that *all five frameworks should be used* in language instruction. As all five frameworks are directed towards the ultimate goal of helping the learner become a proficient and self-sufficient L2 listener, there is no ideal proportion or sequence for using the activity frames.

There are 10 representative activities outlined for each frame, 50 in all. The activities are presented in a schematic fashion:

- **Introduction** outlines the purpose of the activity and highlights how it engenders 'active listening'.

- **Aim** states the learning goal of the activity, from the perspective of the learner: what the learner is intended to notice, experience, practise, or learn.

- **Level** indicates the general proficiency level (Beginner, Intermediate, Advanced) of the students who will benefit from the activity. Adaptations of input and procedure, of course, can be made to alter the suitability for different levels and ages of students.