



## **SOME BARRIERS OF TEACHING LISTENING AND EFFECTIVE TECHNIQUES TO OVERCOME THEM**

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### **Abstract:**

This article explores recent trends and innovations in second and foreign language (L2) listening, including the use of digital tools, multimedia resources, and adaptive learning technologies. It also discusses the growing importance of authentic materials, interaction-based listening activities, and insights from cognitive processing research that influence the design of listening curricula. These challenges necessitate a thoughtful approach to instruction that accommodates varying levels of proficiency.

**Keywords:** Processing studies, challenging skills, assessment of methods, listening strategies, interactive listening exercises.

### **Introduction**

Teaching listening comprehension presents a variety of challenges that learners must navigate to ensure effective learning outcomes. One more significant obstacle is the diverse range of listening skills among students, which can lead to disparities in understanding and engagement during lessons. Additionally, external factors such as background noise and the complexity of spoken language can further delay students' ability to grasp auditory material. These challenges require a thoughtful approach to instruction that accommodates varying levels of proficiency. The development of listening abilities is one of the most important yet challenging aspects of acquiring a second or foreign language. This skill requires active participation, where learners must not only discern sounds and words but also interpret their meanings as they occur. Effective listening serves as a foundation for successful communication, aiding in the comprehension of native speakers, involvement in dialogues, and understanding of diverse media types. However,



recent advancements in technology and a deeper understanding of language acquisition procedures have led to significant shifts in how listening is taught and practiced. These developments have made listening training more interactive, personalized, and aligned with real-world use. In recent years, language educators have increasingly recognized that listening is not a passive activity but an active and integral component of communication. This alteration has led to a growing emphasis on developing listening skills alongside other language competencies such as speaking, reading, and writing.

Listening is an essential component of multimodal communication, where learners interact with a combination of spoken language, visual elements, and gestures. As digital communication platforms continue to grow, learners are increasingly required to understand spoken language in diverse formats, such as video calls, podcasts, and multimedia content. The rise of multimodal learning materials has expanded the importance of listening, making it a central skill for modern language learners.

Among the four fundamental language skills, listening plays a crucial role. It pertains to the understanding of teachers' directives, stories, poems, or various concepts conveyed in English during classroom instruction by the students involved in this research. Purdy (1997) indicates that listening encompasses the processes of receiving, interpreting, and responding to both spoken and nonverbal cues [1]. Rost (2002) elaborates that listening is a sophisticated interpretative process where individuals reconcile auditory information with their pre-existing knowledge [2]. Moreover, Rost (2009) highlights that listening is fundamental to grasping the world around us and is a key factor in achieving effective communication [3]. From mobile apps to virtual reality, recent innovations have created more immersive and flexible ways for learners to develop their listening abilities. Mobile apps have become widely used tools for language learning, providing learners with on-the-go access to listening exercises. Different platforms incorporate listening tasks that range from simple word recognition to more complex dialogues and real-life scenarios. These apps often include listening comprehension tests that offer immediate feedback, allowing learners to correct mistakes and track their progress.

Artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning have revolutionized language learning by offering personalized listening experiences. AI-powered apps use



speech recognition technology to analyze learners' pronunciation and comprehension abilities in real time. Based on the analysis, these tools provide customized feedback and adaptive lessons tailored to the learner's proficiency level. AI also allows for adaptive listening exercises, where tasks adjust dynamically based on learner performance. For example, if a learner struggles with a particular sound or phrase, the app may introduce additional practice with similar sounds or phrases, reinforcing learning through repetition. This personalized approach helps learners overcome specific challenges in listening comprehension. Virtual reality (VR) is emerging as an innovative tool for creating immersive language learning environments. VR platforms allow learners to "step into" virtual worlds where they interact with native speakers in realistic scenarios. For instance, learners might practice listening in a virtual café, on a city street, or during a travel adventure, providing exposure to authentic accents and speech patterns. VR offers a unique advantage by simulating the immersive experience of being in a foreign language environment without leaving home. This approach makes listening practice more engaging and helps learners develop the ability to process spoken language in real-time, as they would in everyday life.

One of the major shifts in second language listening instruction is the move toward using authentic materials—those that were created by native speakers for native speakers, such as news reports, interviews, podcasts, and films. These materials expose learners to natural speech patterns, idiomatic expressions, and cultural references, offering a more realistic listening experience compared to scripted textbook dialogues.

Authentic materials provide learners with exposure to the complexity of real-world language use, which includes various accents, speaking speeds, and informal language. For example, watching a film in the target language can reveal cultural nuances that are otherwise difficult to convey in classroom settings, such as humor, sarcasm, or gestures.

Task-based learning (TBL) is a methodology that integrates listening into real-world tasks. Learners are given specific listening tasks to complete, such as listening to a phone message and summarizing the content or following directions provided in an audio guide. Task-based listening promotes active listening by requiring learners to focus on extracting specific information from the audio, which improves both comprehension and retention. "Listening is a fundamental language



skill, but it is often ignored by foreign and second language teachers.” (Rebeccal, 1993). Recent studies in cognitive science have yielded significant insights into the mechanisms by which learners comprehend spoken language, thereby shaping innovative methodologies for teaching listening skills. These advancements have resulted in the creation of more focused and efficient listening strategies that correspond with the brain's processing of auditory stimuli.

Listening to a foreign language involves complex cognitive processes, such as parsing sounds into words, interpreting meaning, and inferring context—all in real time. Cognitive research has shown that learners benefit from chunking, or breaking down spoken language into smaller, manageable units (such as phrases or short sentences). Chunking allows the brain to process information more efficiently, reducing cognitive overload and improving comprehension. Language instructors are now incorporating chunking strategies into listening lessons, teaching learners to focus on phrases rather than individual words.

The act of listening allows for the real-time processing of language, incorporating unique elements such as pacing, encoding units, and pauses that are characteristic of spoken discourse (Rost 2001:7). Furthermore, Morley (1990:90) characterizes listening comprehension as “an act of information processing in which the listener is involved in two-way communication, or one way communication and/or self-dialogue communication”. Cognitive research has led to the development of exercises that strengthen working memory in the context of language learning. For example, instructors may ask learners to listen to a short dialogue and then answer comprehension questions without looking at the text. This type of exercise trains learners to rely on their working memory to retain and process information, enhancing their overall listening abilities. Recent developments in listening instruction emphasize the importance of integrating both processes.

Instructors are increasingly using activities that encourage learners to engage in top-down processing, such as predicting the content of a conversation based on the context or identifying the main idea of a speech based on visual cues. This balanced approach helps learners become more adept at understanding spoken language in a variety of contexts. Recent developments in second and foreign language listening have transformed how this critical skill is taught and learned. Advances in technology, such as mobile apps, AI-powered platforms, and virtual reality, have made listening practice more accessible, personalized, and immersive.



Additionally, the increased use of authentic materials and task-based learning has brought listening instruction closer to real-world communication.

In conclusion, we can say that artificial intelligence enhances the learning experience by providing customized and adaptive educational opportunities that exceed conventional methods. As society progresses in the realm of language acquisition, the collaboration between AI innovations and human knowledge will continuously reshape the ways in which individuals learn languages within a multilingual context. Although challenges persist, including the comprehension of rapid speech and various accents, contemporary tools and strategies equip learners with the necessary resources to refine their listening abilities and build confidence in their capacity to comprehend and interact with the target language.

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