

Cambridge University Press
978-0-521-86678-1 - Listening in the Language Classroom
John Field
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

Listening in the Language Classroom

Cambridge University Press
 978-0-521-86678-1 - Listening in the Language Classroom
 John Field
 Frontmatter
[More information](#)

CAMBRIDGE LANGUAGE TEACHING LIBRARY

A series covering central issues in language teaching and learning, by authors who have expert knowledge in their field.

In this series:

- Affect in Language Learning** *edited by Jane Arnold*
Approaches and Methods in Language Teaching *second edition by Jack C. Richards and Theodore S. Rodgers*
Beyond Training *by Jack C. Richards*
Classroom Decision-Making *edited by Michael Breen and Andrew Littlejohn*
Collaborative Action Research for English Language Teachers *by Anne Burns*
Collaborative Language Learning and Teaching *edited by David Nunan*
Communicative Language Teaching *by William Littlewood*
Developing Reading Skills *by Françoise Grellet*
Developments in English for Specific Purposes *by Tony Dudley-Evans and Maggie Jo St John*
Discourse Analysis for Language Teachers *by Michael McCarthy*
Discourse and Language Education *by Evelyn Hatch*
The Dynamics of the Language Classroom *by Ian Tudor*
English for Academic Purposes *by R. R. Jordan*
English for Specific Purposes *by Tom Hutchinson and Alan Waters*
Establishing Self-Access *by David Gardner and Lindsay Miller*
The Experience of Language Teaching *by Rose M. Senior*
Foreign and Second Language Learning *by William Littlewood*
Group Dynamics in the language Classroom *by Zoltán Dörnyei and Tim Murphey*
Language Learning in Distance Education *by Cynthia White*
Language Learning in Intercultural Perspective *edited by Michael Byram and Michael Fleming*
Language Teacher Supervision *by Kathleen M. Bailey*
The Language Teaching Matrix *by Jack C. Richards*
Language Test Construction and Evaluation *by J. Charles Alderson, Caroline Clapham and Dianne Wall*
Learner-Centredness as Language Education *by Ian Tudor*
Learners' Stories: Difference and Diversity in Language Teaching *edited by Phil Benson and David Nunan*
Lessons from Good Language Learners *edited by Carol Griffiths*
Managing Curricular Innovation *by Numa Markee*
Materials Development in Language Teaching *edited by Brian Tomlinson*
Motivational Strategies in the Language Classroom *by Zoltán Dörnyei*
Psychology for Language Teachers *by Marion Williams and Robert L. Burden*
Research Methods in Language Learning *by David Nunan*
Rules, Patterns and Words: Grammar and Lexis in English Language Teaching *by Dave Willis*
Second Language Teacher Education *edited by Jack C. Richards and David Nunan*
Society and the Language Classroom *edited by Hywel Coleman*
Task-Based Language Teaching *by David Nunan*
Teacher Language Awareness *by Stephen Andrews*
Teacher Learning in Language Teaching *edited by Donald Freeman and Jack C. Richards*
Teaching Languages to Young Learners *by Lynne Cameron*
Testing for Language Teachers *second edition by Arthur Hughes*
Understanding Research in Second Language Learning *by James Dean Brown*
Using Surveys in Language Programs *by James Dean Brown*
Vocabulary: Description, Acquisition and Pedagogy *edited by Norbert Schmitt and Michael McCarthy*
Vocabulary, Semantics and Language Education *by Evelyn Hatch and Cheryl Brown*
Voices from the Language Classroom *edited by Kathleen M. Bailey and David Nunan*

Cambridge University Press
978-0-521-86678-1 - Listening in the Language Classroom
John Field
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

Listening in the Language Classroom

John Field



CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge University Press
 978-0-521-86678-1 - Listening in the Language Classroom
 John Field
 Frontmatter
[More information](#)

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town, Singapore, São Paulo, Delhi

Cambridge University Press
 The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge CB2 8RU, UK

www.cambridge.org

Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9780521685702

© Cambridge University Press 2008

This publication is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements, no reproduction of any part may take place without the written permission of Cambridge University Press.

First published 2008

Printed in the United Kingdom at the University Press, Cambridge

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloguing in Publication data
 Field, John, 1945–

Listening in the language classroom / John Field.

p. cm. – (Cambridge language teaching library.)

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-0-521-86678-1 hardback

ISBN 978-0-521-68570-2 paperback

1. Language and languages – Study and teaching. 2. Listening – Study and teaching.

3. Second language acquisition – Study and teaching. I. Title. II. Series.

P53.47.F54 2009

428'.0071 – dc22 2008045463

ISBN 978-0-521-68570-2 paperback

ISBN 978-0-521-86678-1 hardback

Cambridge University Press has no responsibility for the persistence or accuracy of URLs for external or third-party internet websites referred to in this publication and does not guarantee that any content on such websites is, or will remain, accurate or appropriate.

Contents

<i>Acknowledgements</i>	page viii
<i>Introduction</i>	1
Part I Background	11
1 <i>Listening then and now</i>	13
2 <i>The comprehension approach: pluses and minuses</i>	26
Part II Rethinking the comprehension approach	35
3 <i>Listening and the learner</i>	37
4 <i>Types of listening</i>	58
Part III Process, not product	77
5 <i>A diagnostic approach to L2 listening</i>	79
6 <i>Dividing listening into its components</i>	96
7 <i>A process approach</i>	110
Part IV A process view of listening	123
8 <i>Input and context</i>	125
9 <i>Decoding and the inconsistent signal</i>	140
10 <i>Decoding: sounds, syllables and words</i>	163
11 <i>Using grammar and intonation</i>	185
12 <i>Amplifying what the speaker says</i>	209
13 <i>Handling information</i>	241

Contents

Part V The challenge of the real world	267
14 <i>Real speech</i>	269
15 <i>Listening strategies</i>	286
16 <i>Strategy instruction in second language listening</i>	304
Part VI Conclusion	325
17 <i>Fitting it together</i>	327
<i>Appendices</i>	336
<i>Glossary of listening-related terms</i>	345
<i>References</i>	353
<i>Index</i>	360

Cambridge University Press
978-0-521-86678-1 - Listening in the Language Classroom
John Field
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

*In recognition of all I owe to my mother
Maud Henrietta Field (1910–1983),
the best of listeners*

Acknowledgements

This book has a long history. It grew from an interest in second language listening that goes back over 25 years, and from an idea that was first mooted ten years ago. I had expected the writing to take eight months but it finally lasted three years. Unsurprisingly, I have built up more than a few debts of gratitude along the way.

As often happens, putting words on the page had the chastening effect of showing the author how little he knows. I rethought ideas that had seemed set in stone and questioned lines of argument that had once been utterly convincing. I also had to find ways of making information relevant to teachers in the field. In circumstances such as these, one badly needs to put one's ideas past an informed listener who has a complete grasp of the issues. I cannot think of anybody more competent to fulfil that role for L2 listening than Gillian Brown, who commands enormous respect among all who work in the area. Gill was enormously generous with her time; and it was a great pleasure and privilege to work with her on the final draft of the book. I cannot stress enough how much poorer the book would have been without the benefit of her experience and without her insights, always perceptive, invariably frank (*'Omit'* featured quite often, and she was always right), and punctuated at well-timed intervals by coffee and walks round the garden.

I also owe a considerable debt to Alison Sharpe of Cambridge University Press for her continuing faith in me and in the book, ever since the time we first discussed it on a train all those years ago. During the writing, I greatly appreciated the sound advice – not to mention the understanding and patience – of Jane Walsh, my editor. The presentation of the material has benefited considerably from the expertise of Jacqueline French, the copy editor, who showed great sensitivity towards both text and author.

Many of the ideas in the book were first developed during a three-week summer school on second language skills that the British Council ran at Oxley Hall in the University of Leeds. (Sadly, like much of the enlightened work that the Council once did, it has now been axed.) I taught there for ten years and remain grateful to the Director, Niall Henderson, for employing me on what was undoubtedly the most rewarding teacher-development experience of my career. Oxley Hall gave me the

Acknowledgements

opportunity of exchanging views on listening with teachers from all over the world. Many of those attending taught in difficult conditions. Some (from Tanzania, Vietnam, Cambodia, the poorer parts of South America) had to make do with the most limited of resources. Others (from eastern Europe, from Palestine, from South Africa, from the Sudan) had been the victims of occupation or intimidation. I developed a huge respect for their commitment and for the enthusiasm with which they embraced the idea that second language listening might be handled more productively – even where they had no reliable power supply or their books and equipment had been destroyed. I hope that former Oxley Hall students will come across this book and remember some happy and stimulating times.

Another much-valued source of ideas has been the relatively small group of teachers, writers and researchers who specialise in second language listening. Over the years, I have been fortunate to work with some and to engage in fruitful discussions with others at conferences or via email. I imagine that traces of all these exchanges can be found somewhere in the pages that follow. I add the usual rider that any errors of interpretation are entirely my own – but (given the topic of the book) I can always fall back on the defence that listeners and readers have no choice but to remake the message.

Finally, it is not surprising that a project that took up so much time and was so important to me put a severe strain upon my personal life. I am lucky indeed to have a group of loyal friends who have kept faith with me over many years; and I cannot thank them enough for their concerned enquiries and their tolerance of my prolonged absence from the scene. Above all, I would like to thank Paul Siedlecki for the support and understanding that has helped me to get through what has been a very long haul.

Publisher's acknowledgements

The authors and publishers acknowledge the following sources of copyright material and are grateful for the permissions granted. While every effort has been made, it has not always been possible to identify the sources of all the material used, or to trace all copyright holders. If any omissions are brought to our notice, we will be happy to include the appropriate acknowledgements on reprinting.

Page 20: text 'Contextual ambiguity' and page 233: Table 12.9 'Sample exercise: text-level reference', from A. Maley and A. Duff, *Variations on a Theme* (1978). By permission of Alan Maley.

Acknowledgements

Page 82: extracts from G. Brown and G. Yule, 'Investigating listening comprehension in context', *Applied Linguistics* 7/3 (1986): 284–302; page 282: extracts from M. Underwood, *Listen to This!* (1975), and page 306: extract from C. Goh and Y. Taib, 'Metacognitive instruction in listening for young learners', *ELT Journal* 60/3 (2006): 222–32. By permission of Oxford University Press.

Pages 103–5: text adapted from Dawn Daly, 'Learner evaluation of a ten-session intensive listening programme', unpublished paper presented at the BAAL/CUP seminar, 'Research perspectives on listening in L1 and L2 education', University of Warwick, 12–13 May 2006. By kind permission of the author.

Page 147: Table 9.2 'Weak forms grouped by word class', adapted from A. C. Gimson, *Gimson's Pronunciation of English* 5th revised edition (1994), ed. Alan Cruttenden, Hodder and Arnold. Reproduced by permission of Edward Arnold; page 154: extract adapted from Richard Cauldwell, *Streaming Speech: Listening and Pronunciation for Advanced Learners of English* (Student Workbook), speechinaction 2003 © Richard Cauldwell.

Pages 229–30: text transcribed from the *Today* programme, 26 October 2005, BBC Radio 4 and page 280: text transcribed from *Any Questions*, 25 January 2008.

Pages 232–3: extracts from Joanne Collie and Stephen Slater, *Listening 3 Student's Book, Cambridge Skills for Fluency* (1993) © Cambridge University Press.

Page 242: extract from M. Geddes, 'A visit to Nepal', in *How to Listen*, BBC Publications.

Pages 300–1: Tables 15.3 'Avoidance and achievement strategies' and 15.4 'Repair strategies', adapted from Z. Dörnyei and M. L. Scott, 'Communication strategies in a second language: definitions and taxonomies', *Language Learning* 44/7/1 (1997): 173–210. By permission of Blackwell Publishing.