

How to help your higher level learners with their listening

Catherine Aygen

AYGEN TRAINING



The listening scale

How would you order these situations on a scale of the easiest to the most difficult in a foreign language? Why?

- A skype call with a group of non-native speakers
- A skype call with native speakers
- Chatting in a busy pub
- Conversation around the dinner table
- A one-on-one conversation with a colleague about work
- Conversation with your teacher
- A 3-hour lecture
- Listening to the radio
- Watching a film without subtitles
- A one-on-one conversation with an acquaintance

Key issues

- Speed
- Accent
- Vocabulary
- Predicting
- Context
- Zoning in and out
- Listening brain freeze and managing expectations
- Strategies for when you don't understand

Speed

What is speed?

What do you have to do to speak English fast?

How can native speakers understand fast speech?

- Stressed words
- Connected speech – elision and contractions

Connected speech ü awareness building

What happens to the words **in red** in fast speech?

Fish **and** chips

a pint **of** beer

I'm **going to** have a look.

I **want to** go on holiday.

Have you finished?

You **should have** told me.

What are you doing?

What did you do yesterday?

How about you?



Understanding fast speech

shwi start now?

Jyuwanna gedda coffee?

I hafta leave.

Ah ya gonna seeyim befori goes?

Shiz bin promoted.

She wz late.

Didya go win the factri?



Understanding fast speech

Did you have a look at this?

So, could you tell me his name again?

We went there last week.

Do you want to get a sandwich?

What will you do next, Tim?

Give me a moment, it's in my handbag.

Connected speech and stressed words ü activities

- Dictogloss
- Cloze text



Accents

- Exposure
- Focus on particular accent differences

tumblr accent challenge

elfpron <https://elfpron.wordpress.com/>

Pronounce these words:

Aunt, Roof, Route, Theater, Iron, Salmon,
Caramel, Fire, Water, New Orleans, Pecan,
Both, Again, Probably, Alabama, Lawyer,
Coupon, Mayonnaise, Pajamas, Caught,
Naturally, Aluminium, GIF, Tumblr,
Crackerjack, Doorknob, Envelope, GPOY

- What is it called when you throw toilet paper on a house?
- What is a bubbly carbonated drink called
- What do you call gym shoes?
- What do you call your grandparents?
- What do you call the wheeled contraption in which you carry groceries at the supermarket?
- What is the thing you change the TV channel with?





Vocabulary

- Phrasal verbs
- Colloquial language
- General missing vocabulary



Context

- Context = prediction of what's coming = brain asks "questions"
- What about when you don't know the context?

In each clip, who's talking and what are they talking about?



Predicting language: what comes next?

- It was going to be **this** weekend...
- I'd already seen him...
- One moment you're going to work as usual...
- Don't worry...
- There are a lot of things I miss from home, but...
- Everything's changed...
- I probably won't be here on **Tuesday**...
- As they say, no smoke...
- I didn't really want to go, so...

Zoning in and out

- “Half-listening”
- Picking out specific information

Parenting Teenagers Horse Race

Will you put that bloody phone down

I don't care

There's nothing to eat

Shut the cupboard

Can I have \$20?

Have you unloaded the dishwasher?

Another selfie

Don't speak to your mother like that

You're not wearing that

It's not fair

All my friends are allowed

Pick the towels up off the floor

Turn the light off

Got no cash

No you can't

Don't slam the door

Can i have a lift down the street?

Have you done your homework?

Turn that music down

You're not going

Get out of bed

Please don't ask again

Your room's a mess



Managing Expectations

- Can a non-native speaker expect to understand everything?
- Can a native speaker expect to understand everything?
- Do you need to understand every word to understand something?
- How can you help learners get over the “listening brain freeze” when they don’t understand everything?

John Snow at a Dinner Party



Strategies for when you don't understand

- Ask for clarification (not repetition)
- Tell the other person you're not used to their accent
- Ask what a word means
- Repeat back what you think the other person said

Bibliography

- Ur, Penny, *Teaching Listening Comprehension*, Cambridge University Press, 1984
-

Thank you!

Catherine Aygen
www.aygentraining.com
catherine@aygen.net

AYGEN TRAINING