Teaching Listening from the Bottom Up

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About Me

Teacher-researcher

Phonology acquisition & listening

'Research' methods for the classroom (and online classroom)

& other things

Outline

- **Bottom-up listening**
- Top-down listening
- Head for the middle

- Prevailing orthodoxy, teacher education
- McGurk effects and streaming infrastructure
- Subtitles and orthography
- Words in isolation, together, and connected
- Intonation and stress

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The Comprehension Approach (CA)

Field (2008)

Reliance on preset questions

Global gist and local detail

Still the most common way to teach (Jones, 2020a)

Yet…

Most teachers in Japan want more training in listening (Jones, 2016)

Not a lot of training given for online remote teaching (Jones, 2020b)
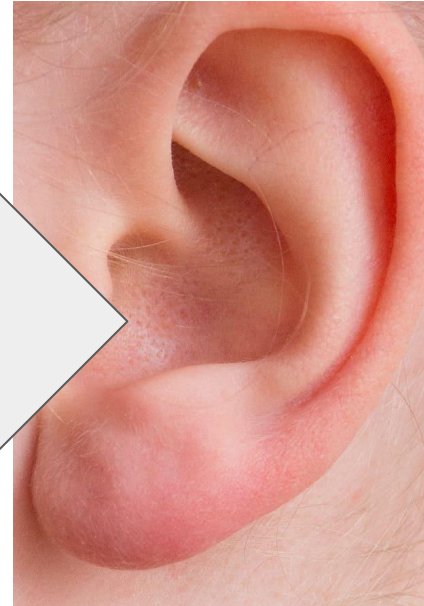
So... problems!

Bottom-up listening skills

Rationale

Acoustic information → Phonemes → Morphemes → Words and utterances →

Too hard?
Too unfamiliar!

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McGurk Effect?

What do you hear?

Relevance?

Netflix is 'bumpy' in Zoom. Apparently.

What can I do?

- Can you use something else?
- Does it have to be from a streaming site?
- Do you have to stream it?

- Can students use it?
- Do they have their own accounts?

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What about subtitles?

The advantages

L1 subtitles improve understanding of meaning.

L2 subtitles improve pronunciation.

(Wisniewska & Mora, 2020)

However

Effects of orthography interferes

Barrios and Hayes Harb (2020) orthography disadvantages perceiving devoicing.

Sokolović-Perović et al., (2019) effect on phoneme length by Japanese learners of English.

Bassetti (2007) Pinyin may interfere with learning of Chinese by 'non-native speakers'

Showalter & Hayes-Harb, (2013) found novel orthography (tone marks) for English learners of Chinese can be positive.

Wisniewska & Mora (2020) found no significant benefits for phonological accuracy in perception.

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Go small!

Field (2008) recommends "micro-listening":

"they ideally feature single sentences, pairs of sentences or very short sections of text, drawn from published, off-air or internet recordings." (Ch. 5, p. 17/24)

Partial YouTube embeds

In Moodle page or another webpage such as Wordpress (partial embeds do not work in Google Slides).

Start time in seconds

End time in seconds

<iframe width="560" height="315" src="https://www.youtube.com/embed/2k8fHR9jKVM?start=60&end=62" frameborder="0" allow="accelerometer; autoplay; encrypted-media; gyroscope; picture-in-picture" allowfullscreen></iframe>

What about clips <2s?

Is it possible? Is it realistic?

It is both possible and realistic but likely time consuming.

After Micro-listening, Go Macro

Start short and build up length

Avoid *only* citation forms

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What seems to cause problems?

Connected speech

Speaker variation

Limited spoken input

Absence of Global Englishes (Galloway & Rose, 2017)

How can they be taught?

Connected speech

Repetition - Commentary! Point things out!

How it can help

Different studies (Bonk, 2000; Joyce, 2013) report learners struggle to perceive/comprehend known words (i.e. words learned in written form) in connected speech.
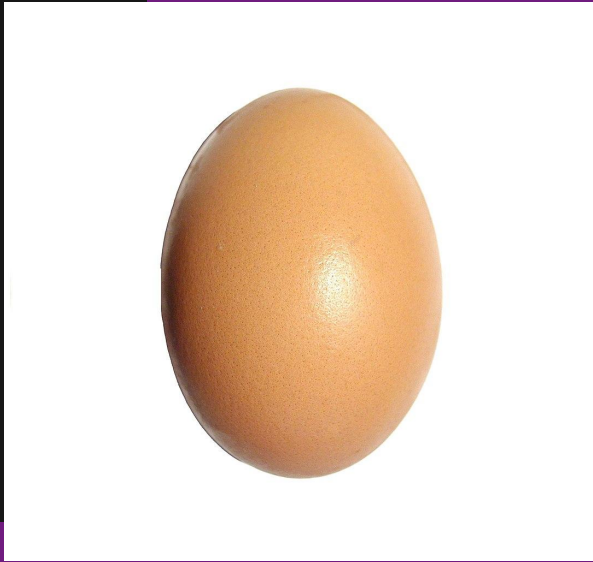
It doesn't need to be produced, just *understood*!

Speaker variation

Um,...

vary speakers in materials.

Jones & Blume (in press) no advantage/disadvantage in vowel acquisition for using Global Englishes speakers as prestige variety speakers

"Global Englishes are difficult!"

Yes. But no more so than 'native' Englishes.

If we avoid difficulty, the difficulty remains.

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Intonation & stress

Related, strongly in most L1 varieties of English.

Usually a pitch change with an intensity change

More likely on lexical than grammatical words

Focus

Identification

Hearing stresses on important items means a lot of the general meaning is captured

When skilled, can focus on spaces *between stresses* (less salient, grammatical nuance, especially negativity)

We cannot control the actual learning environment, so we must advise on it.

Learning environment

- Temperature
- Air flow
- Distractions

All can affect **working memory.**

(Jones, 2018)

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- Topic knowledge
- Discourse knowledge
- Collocations & Primings
- Evaluation

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It's what you know!

Topic knowledge is important - if you don't know anything in *any* language, it's harder to approach.

Spend time brainstorming *but not predicting*. Second guessing is counter-productive!

But what is 'that'?

Teach reference

Back reference is more normal

"Marc puts self-deprecating comments in his presentations. Is he OK?"

Depending on genre, you might get forward reference

"He's a listening researcher and the tallest man in this room. Welcome Marc Jones!"

Teach reference

Sometimes there are cultural references that you either know or don't.

Reassure that ignorance is sometimes OK.

Collocations and Primings

Expectations about what words go together. *Lexical primings* (Hoey, 2005).

Primings seem backed up in text-based and audio research, but only in first language (Bentin, Kutas & Hillyard, 1993).

Appear to be psychological cues. Good for guessing pace Ellis (2002)

Evaluation

Learners need to check what they heard makes sense.

Easier with interactive listening for clarification.

Can check notes reasonable.

Role for group checking.

Head for the middle

So…

Bottom-up builds a sensible model of the stream of speech

Top-down builds a model-like sense of the stream of speech

Either/or is wrong!

We need both. Everyone uses both. (Robinson, 2003)

Beginners use *more* bottom-up

Advanced learners *more* top-down. (Goh, 1998)

References available online

Get in touch!

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Your questions...

Marc Jones (2 July 2022)

Yokohama JALT: Teaching Listening

from the Bottom Up.

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