

Exploring Teaching Beliefs on EFL Listening

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Abstract

The study aims to explore teaching beliefs on EFL listening instruction. The participants were 36 EFL teachers in junior high schools in Taiwan. The participating teachers first completed the questionnaires of teachers' beliefs. Then, eight of them were recruited voluntarily for classroom observations, and finally, semi-structured interviews were held with the eight volunteer teachers to explore more specific insights based on their questionnaire responses and classroom behaviors. Results show that the EFL teachers regarded listening as the most important English skill. The teaching belief most often held by the teachers is 'building up students' confidence in their own listening ability'. According to the teachers' perspectives, the important EFL listening skills are the ability to detect key words and the ability to guess the meanings of words from the contexts. The important teaching activities are to make listening work enjoyable and create pre-listening activities that give a useful preview of the content and procedures in the activity.

Keywords

Extensive reading (ER), reading attitude, English as a foreign language (EFL)

1 Introduction

In Taiwan, there has been increased attention to the teaching of EFL listening in recent years. Many learners realize that they need good listening skills to support the demands made on them in school, work, travel or other settings. Moreover, the Ministry of Education has decided to include the listening test in English entrance exams for both senior high schools and universities. As a result, language institutes and publishers have responded to these needs by providing a range of courses and materials to support the teaching of EFL listening. In a sense then EFL listening instruction has never been in a better state in Taiwan, with few questioning its usefulness and with a wide variety of teaching resources for teachers to utilize. However, there are fundamental questions concerning the pedagogy of EFL listening. Acting on washback, how do EFL teachers look upon teaching listening in high schools? According to Allen (2013), there is a complex relationship between teachers' beliefs and their classroom practices. It is generally accepted that teachers' beliefs influence their curricular and instructional choices, as well as many other aspects involved in teaching. Thus, a critical issue of EFL listening instruction in Taiwan is to examine teachers' beliefs in teaching listening with the hope of facilitating their teaching effectiveness and further improving students' listening proficiency. The present research aims to explore teacher beliefs in L2 listening instruction. The study will mainly examine the beliefs held by EFL teachers toward teaching listening in junior high schools in Taiwan.

As indicated by a number of researchers (e.g. Mendelsohn 2001, 2006; Berne 2004; LeLoup & Pontiero 2007), it is important to develop L2 listening competence not only valuable for its own sake but useful for the growth of other aspects of language use, yet learners are rarely taught how to listen effectively. According to Vandergrift (2007), if L2 listening research is seen as a building project, more work is still needed to shore up the foundations to further our understanding of how to teach this important skill. Besides, Pajares (1992) argued that the beliefs teachers hold influence their perceptions and judgments, which, in turn, affect their behavior in the classroom. Understanding the belief structures of teachers is essential to improving their professional preparation and teaching practices. Given the significance of teachers' beliefs in L2 listening, however, there has been little research conducted, especially in EFL context. As a result, researchers are encouraged to provide specific insights into this critical issue and thus generate more effective suggestions for L2 listening pedagogy.

2 Research on L2 teachers' beliefs

There has been a growing body of research on the investigation of foreign/second language teachers' beliefs about a wide variety of aspects of language teaching and learning. For example, Allen (2010, 2013) analyzed teachers' beliefs about developing language proficiency within the context of study abroad in order to determine if their beliefs are compatible with the literature on foreign language teaching. Sakui and Gaies (2003) explored the relationship between teachers' beliefs and their self-identity. Bell (2005) studied teachers' beliefs about effective teaching behaviors. Lacorte (2005) examined the relationship between teachers' knowledge and beliefs and their practices in Spanish classrooms in the USA. Borg (2011) studied the impact of professional development on teachers' beliefs.

A number of studies compared teachers' beliefs about certain aspects of their work with the beliefs held by their students. Peacock (1998) examined teachers' and students' beliefs about the usefulness of certain classroom activities. Levine (2003) studied teachers' and students' beliefs about anxiety associated with target language use and found that teachers believed their students to be more anxious than did the students themselves. Chavez (2007) compared teachers' beliefs about the degree of accuracy needed to obtain a grade of A with what students believed. Brown (2009) compared beliefs held by teachers and students about what constitutes effective teacher behaviors. Recently, Hu & Tian (2012) have investigated the beliefs of teachers and students regarding strategies for learning and teaching Chinese tones, which constitute a crucial feature of the spoken language and often cause problems for learners.

In terms of language policy, Farrel and Kun (2008) investigated the impact of language policy on the beliefs and classroom practices of three primary school teachers concerning the use of Singlish in their classrooms. Results indicate that teachers' reaction to language policy is not a straightforward process and it is important to understand the role teachers play in the enactment of language policy. McMillan and Rivers (2011) surveyed 29 'native-English speaker' teachers at a Japanese university where the exclusive use of the target language is promoted as a key feature of the optimal foreign language learning environment. Results showed that, contrary to the official policy, many teachers believed that selective use of the students' L1 could enhance L2 learning in various ways within a communicative framework. In addition, Yavuz (2012) examined the attitudes of English teachers in Turkey about the use of L1 in the teaching of L2. The research concludes that EFL teachers emphasize the necessary use of L1 in structural teaching and prefer the 'teach English in English' motto in communicative teaching.

Another area that has attracted the interest of researchers is communicative language teaching and teachers' beliefs. Kocaman and Cansız (2012) studied teachers' beliefs about teaching English to elementary school children. They compared beliefs held by 192 non-native in-service and pre-service teachers in Turkey. Results indicated that both groups strongly supported communicative language teaching methodology, emphasizing the need for addressing children's educational and emotional needs.

Besides, teachers' beliefs on grammar and focus on form, and error correction have also received considerable attention. A large scale study conducted by Borg and Burns (2008) examined the beliefs and practices about the integration of grammar and skills teaching of 176 English teachers from 18 countries. They found that teachers made judgments about the effectiveness of their grammar teaching practice in practical and experiential ways, without referring to SLA theory. Phipps and Borg (2009) also studied tensions in the grammar teaching beliefs and practices of three practicing English teachers in Turkey. They argued that the study of tensions between stated beliefs and classroom behaviors should be grounded on teachers' actual classroom practices.

Among the relatively few studies that have examined beliefs in L2 listening, most of the research focused on beliefs about the problems associated with the skill. An early study by Powers (1986) investigated the perspectives of Canadian and US university educators of non-native speakers of English. A questionnaire gathered the teachers' views on the importance of various listening activities for academic success and the difficulties non-native speakers experienced. According to the results, educators believed that L2 learners

had greater difficulties with both top-down and bottom-up processing. Except Power's study (1986), most of the later studies have examined perceptions of L2 listening difficulties from the learners' point of view. For example, a series of research by Goh (1997, 1999, 2000) gathered data from Chinese learners of English. She proposed that the factors learners believed influenced their listening included vocabulary used in the text, prior knowledge of the passage's theme, speech rate, type of input, and speaker's accent. Vogely (1995) and Hasan (2000) also investigated learners' perceptions of listening comprehension problems and learners' perceived strategy use on authentic listening tasks, respectively. Moreover, Graham (2006) examined the perceptions held by English speakers regarding listening comprehension in French and how they view the reasons behind their lack of success in listening.

Pajares (1992) argued that the beliefs teachers hold influence their perceptions and judgments, which, in turn, affect their behavior in the classroom. Understanding the belief structures of teachers is essential to improving their professional preparation and teaching practices. Given the significance of teacher beliefs in L2 listening, however, there has been little research conducted, especially in EFL context. As a result, researchers are encouraged to provide specific insights into this critical issue and thus generate more effective suggestions for L2 listening pedagogy. In terms of the literature reviewed above, we can hardly find research exploring teachers' beliefs in listening instruction. Based on the researcher's extensive work on EFL listening research and instruction in the past two decades, the current study aims to help fill this void by examining junior high school EFL teachers' beliefs in listening instruction. By providing empirical descriptions of EFL teachers' beliefs, this study is expected to contribute to the limited body of research on teachers' beliefs in L2 listening instruction.

3 Method

3.1 Participants

The participants in this study were 344 first-year students at a private Japanese university. The students were three cohorts of International Studies majors enrolled in a mandatory, communicative English course. Almost all of the participants were L1 Japanese speakers, aged between 18-20 years old. The English proficiency levels of the participants varied widely as indicated by their TOEIC results, with participants' scores during the year of the study ranging from 180 to 750.

3.2 Instruments

The instruments used in the study consisted of a questionnaire, an observation form, and an interview guide. The questionnaire of teachers' beliefs in EFL listening instruction (see Appendix) was designed based on previous research (Richards, 1983; Shohamy, 1985; Underwood, 1989; Goh, 2000; Flowerdew & Miller, 2005; Rost, 2011). It contained 40 statements about listening instruction comprising beliefs in five areas, including objectives of teaching listening, listening difficulties, specific listening skills, activities of teaching listening, and listening assessment. The closed questions required participants to choose from a five-point Likert scale indicating varying degrees of agreement on teacher beliefs. The Cronbach's alpha was 0.869 in terms of the reliability of the questionnaire.

As a global construct, teacher belief does not lend itself easily to empirical investigation (Pajares, 1992). According to Munby (1984), qualitative measures such as open-ended interviews, responses to dilemmas, and observation of behavior should be included if richer and more accurate inferences are to be made. By echoing the multiple instruments adopted in the recent literature (e.g., De Costa, 2011; Peng, 2011; Busse, 2013), the present study employed classroom observations and semi-structured interviews to sensitively capture the complex nature of teachers' beliefs. The classroom observation form based on Rhoads *et al.* (2011) included ten sections, i.e., subject matter content, organization, rapport, teaching methods, presentation, management, sensitivity, assistance to students, personal and physical aspects of classroom. Finally, an interview guide of seven main questions based on Trindler (2013) was developed to further explore participants' beliefs in teaching EFL listening.

3.3 Procedures

The study was conducted separately in three junior high schools in Taiwan. First, 12 EFL teachers in each of

the three schools were sent an invitation letter to participate in the study and informed of the purpose and procedures of the study. Secondly, participants answered the questionnaires of teachers' beliefs in EFL listening instruction. Furthermore, eight of the participants were recruited voluntarily for classroom observations and follow-up interviews. Classroom observations were conducted by the research assistants, who were graduate students specializing in SLA and TESOL. Finally, semi-structured interviews were held with the eight volunteer participants to explore more specific insights based on their questionnaire responses and classroom behaviors.

3.4 Data analysis

Questionnaire data were analyzed by SPSS version 18.0 with answers coded along a scale of 1 (strongly disagree), 2 (disagree), 3 (undecided), 4 (agree), to 5 (strongly agree). Cronbach's alpha was computed to confirm the internal consistency reliability of the questionnaire. Independent-sample t-tests were used to compare the teachers' beliefs held by groups of different genders, ages, degrees, and teaching periods. Based on content analysis, the data of classroom observations and semi-structured interviews were fully transcribed and categorized.

4 Results

4.1 Teachers' responses to questionnaire on EFL listening instruction

Based on the frequency counting of each item, the results of the teacher belief questionnaire completed by participants are described below. The first item asked how the EFL teachers considered the importance of the four language skills. Results show that listening is the most important English skill, followed by speaking and reading. The teachers regarded writing as the least important skill.

Table 1 shows the descriptive statistics of the five categories of listening teaching beliefs held by the participants. Among the five categories, 'listening assessment' has the highest average agreement. Then, following the order are 'teaching activities', 'teaching objectives', and 'listening skills'. 'Listening difficulties' has the lowest average agreement.

Table 1: Descriptive statistics of teachers' beliefs

Category	N	Mean	SD	Rank
Teaching Objectives	36	4.10	0.40	3
Listening Difficulties	36	3.77	0.42	5
Listening Skills	36	4.09	0.48	4
Teaching Activities	36	4.14	0.41	2
Listening Assessment	36	4.17	0.48	1

Table 2: Eight frequent teachers' beliefs in EFL listening instruction

Category	Teacher Belief	Rank
Objectives	Building up students' confidence in their own listening ability	1
Activities	Make listening work enjoyable	2
Skills	Ability to detect key words	3
Assessment	Simulate test conditions with a full current-version test administered as the actual test will be, with actual time constraints	4
Assessment	Have students be familiar with the format of the tests they will take, including all subsections of the test	5
Activities	Create pre-listening activities that give a useful preview of the content and procedures in the activity	6
Objectives	Exposing students to a range of listening experiences.	7
Assessment	Speech rates that are very fast should be avoided	8

Moreover, Table 2 lists the eight beliefs most often held by the teachers among the 40 beliefs in EFL listening instruction. Results show that ‘building up students’ confidence in their own listening ability’ is the most frequent teacher belief, and next is ‘make listening work enjoyable,’ followed by ‘ability to detect key words.’

In regard to the beliefs on how to teach EFL listening, Table 3 indicates that among the eight beliefs in listening teaching activities, the belief ‘make listening work enjoyable’ has the highest average agreement. The belief ‘decrease the amount of oral or written production that is required of the students during the listening phase of the activity’ has the lowest agreement.

Table 3: Beliefs in listening teaching activities

Item	N	Mean	SD	Rank
Make English the language of your classroom.	36	4.17	0.56	5
Create pre-listening activities that give a useful preview of the content and procedures in the activity.	36	4.39	0.64	2
Break down the steps of the activity in order to provide sub-goals.	36	4.03	0.70	6
Decrease the amount of oral or written production that is required of the students during the listening phase of the activity.	36	3.42	0.94	8
Set activities for listening that personally engage your students.	36	4.28	0.66	3
Not treating the activities as tests to be marked and scored.	36	3.94	0.92	7
Give visual support for the listening activity.	36	4.19	0.82	4
Make listening work enjoyable.	36	4.67	0.53	1

4.2 Teachers’ answers to interview on EFL listening instruction

In order to sensitively capture the complex nature of teachers’ beliefs, semi-structured interviews were adopted to collect teachers’ perceptions toward EFL listening instruction. The following section shows the participants’ responses to some of the interview questions.

In your opinion, is it important to have good EFL listening skills? Why or why not?

Teachers all believe that it is important to have good EFL listening skills because to understand what other people said, one must learn how to listen first. If one knows how to listen, one will know how to give a proper response. Therefore, many of the teachers believe that listening is the most fundamental skill and this skill should be first acquired. Moreover, many of the teachers believe that good EFL listening skills facilitate communication. Many teachers think that the purpose of using language is communication. Good listening skills help absorb correct information and give a proper response. Therefore, good listening skills facilitate communication.

Last, many of the teachers believe that if students do not have good EFL listening skills will negatively affect their learning. Teachers state that students will fail to enjoy the fun of learning English in their learning process because they cannot learn English by listening. For example, one of the teachers said students who do not have good EFL listening skill could only learn a new word by rote. Also, two of them

said these students also fail to enjoy a more fun and interesting way to learn English.

Please describe your past experience of learning EFL listening.

When examining teachers' learning process, there is a common reason explaining why EFL listening teaching is not much emphasized. Their high school teachers' teaching method is very traditional. Only reading ability, vocabulary size, and writing ability are much emphasized. Besides, their teachers teach English in Chinese, which makes them have fewer chances of listening in English. One of the teachers explained, "The main reason may be EFL listening test is not a part of the entrance exam."

Please describe your student's EFL listening difficulties.

Most of the teacher's students encounter the same EFL listening difficulties: lack of vocabulary. Most teachers stated that students could not understand what had been heard because their students' vocabulary size is not large enough. This leads to the failure on listening comprehension and choosing correct answers. Some of the teachers say that students may lose their focus when conducting a long listening practice. One teacher said, "Students would listen attentively in the beginning but start to lose their attention and even get sleepy after a while."

Some of the teachers say that if the speed of the recording were too fast, students would get nervous and fail to understand what has been said. Besides, some thought that students get nervous easily for two reasons: fast speed and lack of practice. One teacher said, "If one is too nervous to understand the first sentence, they will fail to understand the follow-up sentences."

What are the challenges for you to teach EFL listening in junior high schools?

The interviewed teachers think that teaching materials hinder them from effective teaching. There is only one kind of teaching material for all students of different levels. Besides, most teachers rely on the textbook, which is not diverse enough for EFL listening practice. One of the teachers said that students tend to get sleepy while doing the listening drills. Moreover, most of the teachers face the same challenge, i.e., highly limited instruction time. Teachers have to follow the school curriculum while students have to study for the mid-term tests and simulation tests coming one after another. Therefore, teachers spend much time on teaching vocabulary, text, and grammar, and the time spent on EFL listening instruction is comparatively much less. One teacher said, "The time proportioned for listening instruction is only around one period." Another teacher even said, "Some of the ninth graders are not willing to spend much time on listening, because this is not the major part of the test."

Some teachers complained that there is a huge gap between advanced and lower-level students. For advanced students, EFL listening is not that difficult while the lower-level students do not think so. One teacher said that advanced students even "demand more difficult listening materials." Other teachers also assert that teaching EFL listening by grouping student's ability is a must.

Do you feel confident in teaching EFL listening? Why or why not?

Some of the teachers do not have confidence in teaching EFL listening because of the tight schedule. They have to follow school teaching schedules and therefore spend less time on EFL listening instruction. Some teachers have no idea how to teach EFL listening because they did not learn the teaching methods when they studied in universities. Many teachers also admit that they need to absorb related knowledge on EFL listening instruction. Besides, some teachers do not know whether their strategy of EFL listening instruction is effective or not. Its effect is not apparent and immediate. Even though a student is drifting off to sleep, he or she can still choose an answer. Therefore, it is hard to evaluate students' performance and teacher's teaching method. Moreover, when playing the recording, students all go silent, teachers then fail to know whether students are concentrated on listening or not while some students fail to tell teachers which part they do not listen clearly.

In your opinion, what are the ways to improve EFL listening instruction?

Most of the teachers believe that movies, animations and TV series can spark students' interests. Some of

the teachers say that the videos can be the extension materials of textbook. They can also learn vocabulary and some useful sentences from the videos. Besides, students would be eager to know what the video is all about and try to listen to its narration or conversation. When asked if there is any way to improve EFL listening instruction, most of the teachers started with the phrase “If we are not on the tight schedule...” This means that teachers need more time on EFL instruction. Besides, some teachers think if students do not study for tests, they will learn English better. Since teachers do not have much time for teaching EFL listening, they have to find other ways to compensate for students’ lack of listening practice. Therefore, some teachers teach in English and others encourage students to speak English more in class. Some teachers also encourage students to answer questions and deliver their thoughts in English. Besides, two of the teachers think that EFL listening ability should be acquired along with speaking and one of them makes English conversations with students in class.

4.3 Description of Classroom Observation

The study also adopted classroom observations to examine teachers’ beliefs and triangulate the findings from questionnaires and interviews. With regard to organization, instructors had specific teaching objectives, starting their instructions from smaller units of language, such as vocabulary and sentence structures, to larger units, such as dialogue and text. In regard to rapport, instructors encouraged students to participate in the class activities. Some students were enthusiastic while some low proficiency students were unwilling to take part in the activity and have a tendency to speak Chinese or distract from the class. Regarding teaching methods, instructors enhanced students’ learning by using diverse teaching materials, such as videos, flashcards and learning sheets. They provided understandable examples to students as well; however, owing to the limited time, some questions were unable to proceed. In terms of presentation, most instructors utilized multimedia appropriately and have clear voice. The instructors spoke mainly Chinese in class, and they attempted to use English to ask listening comprehension questions, but sometimes they spoke too fast.

5 Discussion

In the current study, results indicate that EFL teachers in junior high schools regarded listening as the most important skill among the four English language skills. The finding is mostly due to the new educational policy in Taiwan that the senior high school entrance exam has included the English listening test since 2015. According to Bailey (1998), the effect of a test has on teaching and learning is known as washback. In terms of the social and educational contexts in which assessment is used, testing always influences the goals of instruction by way of washback effect (Rost, 2011). Moreover, with the prevalence of communicative language teaching in recent years, no wonder the junior high teachers considered listening the most important skill to teach in EFL classrooms.

With regard to teachers’ beliefs in listening teaching objectives, the results of the present study echoes Underwood’s (1989) claim on the teacher’s objectives of listening instruction. Second language (L2) teachers can adopt a variety of listening texts to expose students to a range of listening experiences. Extensive listening is generally considered appropriate for all students (Waring, 2010). Teachers can explain the listening process to students, and teach them the effective listening strategies. Most of the junior high students only have beginner or intermediate-low proficiency of EFL listening. The teachers should try hard to build up students’ confidence in their listening ability by providing experiences and activities in which they can be successful. Besides, the study found that ‘teaching listening through attention to accuracy and analysis of form’ is the least frequent belief among the 40 teachers’ beliefs. The result is consistent with Brown’s (2009) which indicated that L2 teachers preferred a more communicative rather than a grammar-based approach.

In terms of the beliefs in listening difficulties, the study results show that ‘do not recognize words they know’, ‘understand words but not the intended message’, and ‘lack control over the speech rate’ are the frequent listening difficulties. The findings support the previous research (Powers, 1986; Underwood, 1989; Goh, 1997, 1999, 2000) which proposed that L2 listeners had greater difficulties in words used in the text,

problems of interpretation, and speech rate. The teachers in the study also consider that their students often neglect the incoming message when thinking about word meaning. This may be explained by the fact that junior high students have very few chances of EFL listening and do not know how to effectively approach it. Besides, the participating teachers regarded the ability to use real world knowledge and the ability to predict outcomes as important listening skills. The results confirm Buck's (2001), which indicated that the ability to make inferences and to incorporate background knowledge into text processing is one of the top-level attributes for listening test performance. As for teaching activities, the frequent teachers' beliefs include 'making listening work enjoyable' and 'creating pre-listening activities'. The beliefs echo Underwood (1989) and Rost (2011) who suggested that L2 students need to be at ease and calm to listen attentively and that pre-listening can be a warm-up activity to remind students of the content and vocabulary they will need for schema activation.

In regard to listening assessment, the participating teachers believe it is important to simulate test conditions and get students familiar with the format of the tests they will take. The finding supports Rost's (2011) which suggest it is useful to simulate test conditions and have students be familiar with the test format for helping students do their best on tests and thus creating a positive washback effect on instruction. Besides, the teachers think that speech rates that are very fast should be avoided in listening tests. When outlining factors to consider for preparing listening tests, Thompson (1995) also suggested that speech rates that are very fast should be avoided. In order not to raise students' listening anxiety, EFL teachers should prepare or choose listening test material with moderate and natural speech rates which meet the students' proficiency level.

6 Conclusion

As indicated by a number of researchers (e.g., Mendelsohn 2001; Berne 2004; LeLoup & Pontiero 2007), it is important to develop L2 listening competence not only valuable for its own sake but for the growth of other aspects of language use, yet learners are rarely taught how to listen effectively. According to Vandergrift (2007), if L2 listening research is seen as a building project, more work is still needed to shore up the foundations to further our understanding of how to teach this important skill. The current study found that the junior high school EFL teachers regarded listening as the most important English skill. Based on their teaching beliefs, EFL teachers must build up students' confidence in their own listening ability. The important listening skills which should be taught are the ability to detect key words and the ability to guess the meanings of words from the contexts. Moreover, EFL teachers need to make listening work enjoyable, create pre-listening activities, and get students familiar with the format of the listening tests they will take.

To sum up, understanding the belief structures of teachers is essential to improving their professional preparation and teaching practices. By providing empirical descriptions of EFL teachers' beliefs, this study is expected to offer specific insights into this critical issue and thus generate more effective suggestions for L2 listening pedagogy, and ultimately to teach high school students to become more effective EFL listeners.

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Appendix A. Questionnaire of teachers' beliefs in EFL listening instruction

Background information

Gender: Female _____ Male _____

Age: 21-30 _____ 31-40 _____ 41-50 _____ 51-60 _____ 61-70 _____

Highest Degree of Education Obtained:
 College/University _____ Master _____ Ph.D. _____

How many years have you been teaching EFL in junior high schools?
 0-1 _____ 2-5 _____ 6-10 _____ 11-15 _____ 16-20 _____ 21-25 _____ 26-30 _____

Importance of four language skills

Please rank the importance of the four language skills.
 (1: most important, 2: second important, 3: third important, 4: least important)
 Listening _____ Speaking _____ Reading _____ Writing _____

Based on your experiences as an EFL teacher, please circle the response on agreement to indicate your beliefs in the following aspects of EFL listening instruction.

1: Strongly Disagree; 2: Disagree; 3: Undecided; 4: Agree; 5: Strongly Agree

Objectives of teaching listening

1. Exposing students to a range of listening experiences.
2. Making listening purposeful for the students.
3. Helping students understand what listening entails and how they might approach it.
4. Building up students' confidence in their own listening ability.
5. Teaching listening through face-to-face interaction.
6. Teaching listening through focusing on meaning to learn new and important content in the target language.
7. Teaching listening through work on comprehension activities.
8. Teaching listening through attention to accuracy and an analysis of form.

Listening difficulties

9. Lack control over the speed at which speakers speak.
10. Unable to get things repeated.
11. Do not recognize words they know.
12. Unable to concentrate.
13. Quickly forget what is heard.
14. Cannot chunk streams of speech
15. Understand words but not the intended message.
16. Neglect the next part when thinking about meaning.

Specific listening skills

17. Ability to retain chunks of language of different lengths for short periods.
18. Ability to discriminate among the distinctive sounds of the target language.
19. Ability to recognize reduced forms of words.
20. Ability to detect key words (i.e., those which identify topics and propositions).
21. Ability to guess the meanings of words from the contexts in which they occur.
22. Ability to use real world knowledge and experience to work out purposes, goals, settings, procedures.
23. Ability to predict outcomes from events described.
24. Ability to make use of facial, paralinguistic, and other clues to work out meanings.

Activities of teaching listening

25. Make English the language of your classroom.
26. Create pre-listening activities that give a useful preview of the content and procedures in the activity.
27. Break down the steps of the activity in order to provide sub-goals.
28. Decrease the amount of oral or written production that is required of the students during the listening phase of the activity.
29. Set activities for listening that personally engage your students.
30. Do not treat the activities as tests to be marked and scored.
31. Give visual support for the listening activity.
32. Make listening work enjoyable.

Listening assessment

33. Have students be familiar with the format of the tests they will take, including all subsections of the test.
34. Simulate test conditions with a full current-version test administered as the actual test will be, with actual time constraints.
35. Specialized vocabulary needs to be avoided in general listening tests.
36. Speech rates that are very fast (e.g., above 200 wpm) should be avoided.
37. Test passages should be short, around two or three minutes.
38. Listening comprehension tests should not ask memory questions and should allow students to take notes.
39. Consideration should be given to the amount of prior knowledge that students may require to comprehend the text.
40. Inserting discourse markers may aid comprehension (e.g., Today I am going to talk about ...).