

Did you say what I thought you said? Teaching listening

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Outline of Listening Scheme - An example from a French AS group

Listening Aim

To increase students' ability to understand advertisements

Language aims

To enable students to understand spoken and written adverts

To enable students to request information by telephone

To enable students to write a letter of complaint

Knowledge

Vocabulary, discourse-markers, register, stress, word boundaries, intonation, pronunciation, sound: spelling correlation, L1 L2 interference

Skills

Reading, writing, speaking and listening

Principle: Cover all the material within the topic as usual, but consider each activity in terms of its relationship to listening skills development.

Scheme outline

- Preparatory listening
- Immediate pre-listening
- Listening
- Immediate post-listening
- Post-listening

Preparatory Pre-listening

TASK	PURPOSE
read one-page holiday brochures, identifying imperatives and stylistic devices	familiarise learners with the vocabulary and stylistic devices used in adverts
rewrite more formal holiday brochure in a more dynamic, attention-catching style, using previous brochures studied as examples (commensurate with the style of radio advert)	practise using vocabulary and stylistic devices appropriately and raise awareness of the concept of “register” in writing
write own holiday brochure in a similar style	practise using vocabulary and stylistic devices appropriately to express own ideas

Immediate pre-listening

TASK	PURPOSE
look up meanings of a list of “phrases which will be heard” (i.e. discourse-markers and lexical items)	help learners to identify similarity between L1 discourse style and L2 discourse style for the same discourse type (publicity material)
brainstorm in class possible answers to accompanying questions (means of transport, sports, etc.)	help learners to bring to the fore prior knowledge and possible vocabulary

Listening

TASK	PURPOSE
listen to the whole extract all the way through and tick off the phrases as heard (bottom-up)	help learners to associate sound with spelling, recognise word boundaries, become familiar with the stress pattern, recognise discourse markers and focus on information-carrying material
listen closely to the extract completing the utterance in which the above was heard (bottom-up)	help learners to recognise discourse markers, focus on information-carrying material, become aware of compensation strategies, associate sound with spelling, identify word boundaries and become familiar with the stress pattern
listen for the answers to the questions, referring to the possible answers previously suggested (top-down, scanning; prior-knowledge)	help learners to focus on listening for specific information and to use prior knowledge effectively
listen for which of several towns were mentioned (top-down, scanning; prior-knowledge)	help learners to associate sound with spelling, and to recognise word boundaries
listen to complete cloze sentences - transcription with first letter of words given (bottom-up)	help learners to associate sound with spelling and to identify word boundaries

listening for whether statements were true or false (scanning and then skimming)	help learners to listen to find out specific information and to use pre-identified phrases and vocabulary to aid comprehension
listening to cloze text - literal transcription of single words (bottom-up)	help learners to associate sound with spelling and to identify word boundaries

Immediate post-listening

TASK	PURPOSE
check answers with transcript	allow learners to confirm answers through reading
discuss how did they got on (in English)	allow learners to share feelings of frustration and success and inform teacher of which areas caused difficulty, allow for feedback on why some tasks were more difficult than others
identify cloze-test errors (-> contrast aspirated English /t /with non-aspirated French /t/and ease of confusion between /t/ /d/ and /n/, etc.)	allow learners to pinpoint specific sound/spelling correlations and interference of L1 in understanding
encourage learners to keep a record of transcript errors to learn from	encourage learners to feel that they can use their errors for improved performance in the future

Post-listening

TASK	PURPOSE
write own script for a radio advert for the holiday advertised in written brochure	encourage learners to re-use vocabulary and stylistic devices language from the listening and reading material
record script, making it as authentic as possible	encourage learners to concentrate on what the L2 sounds like in terms of intonation and stress patterns and how this differs from the L1
listen to another student's advert, making notes on content	allow learners to listen again to similar vocabulary, discourse markers and stylistic devices
"telephone" student requesting a brochure (paying attention to pronunciation and intonation)	allow learners to concentrate on how L2 sounds, raise learners' awareness of the difference between two discourse types (advert/request for information)
read individual written feedback from teacher on own radio advert (pronunciation, grammar, intonation, stress, etc.)	allow learners to receive focussed, personalised feedback on speaking
discuss individual feedback shared with other students in teacher-led discussion	allow learners the opportunity to share what they did well and which areas they need to improve, and to learn from each other

listen as class to two student radio adverts and contrast intonation (very English -> more French)	allow learners to identify actively what makes for an authentic-sounding L2 speech and to identify differences between L1 and L2 with reference to stress patterns, pronunciation, intonation, etc.
" telephone " other student to complain about the difference in the reality and what was promised in the brochure and radio advert	allow learners to re-use the vocabulary and restructure the stylistic devices in a way appropriate to a different discourse type, e.g. intonation of complaining
record and listen carefully to own conversation - how authentic is it? does it sound French? Why (not)?	enable learners to concentrate on what they sound like as speakers of L2 and in which ways their L1 is interfering
write to other student complaining as above (re-use phrases) based on sample letters	allow learners to re-use the vocabulary and phrases in a different register and improve understanding of the concept of register