How teachers teach listening in Japan: Part I
Andrew Blyth
University of Canberra
ablyth@uni.canberra.edu.au
www.Winjeel.Com
************

Context
Nagoya, central Japan, mainly tertiary sector, and elementary & junior high schools

Problem
We don’t actually know how teachers are teaching listening

What we do know
• We know teachers have used Methods in the past, like the Audio-lingual Method
• Comprehension Approach: Teaching listening focuses mainly on students answering questions (Field 2008)
• Eclectica: Where for general pedagogy, teachers use any approach, method, or activities that seem to meet teachers’ needs for a particular moment in a lesson

Methodology
• Sequential exploratory strategy (Qualitative then Quantitative stages; Creswell 2009)
• This presentation: is about the data from interviews (the Qual stage)
• Analysis was based on the Grounded Approach and influenced by Miles and Huberman (1994)

Results
These themes emerged: types of teachers; influence of curriculums; pronunciation is used to teach listening; videos are now used; goals of listening during the lesson.

1. Types of teachers (or their preferences)
• The flier (who used mainly top-down approaches in listening instruction)
• The diver (who used mainly bottom-up approaches listening in instruction)
• The flier & diver borrowers (who used mainly either top-down or bottom-up, but borrowed a little from the other type of teachers’ repertoire)
• The Synergist (an “all-rounder”; previously “The Ecologist” in previous presentations; who teaches both top-down and bottom-up in appropriate proportions)

2. Influences on listening lessons
Teachers seemed constrained to teach in either top-down or bottom-up approaches because of one or some of these (in order from greatest impact to least): textbook choice and design; teachers’ own preferences (and / or training); managers’ or students’ expectations on how listening should be taught; and the institutional curriculum.

3. Teaching pronunciation for listening
Was considered important for some teachers, as students often had their own expectations on how certain English words should be pronounced, which seemed to interfere with their
ability to listen. For instance, in a textbook recording ‘robot’ would be pronounced as \(/rea.bot/\), but Japanese students expect to hear \(/ro.bo.to/\). Without pronunciation instruction, T2 assumed students would miss this word entirely.

4. Audio-visual Materials

Teachers are increasingly using video for mainly top-down instruction, but some for bottom up. Sources include movie excerpts, YouTube, music videos, and CNN Interviews.

5. Goals of listening in lessons

It seems that the goal of listening and listening activities is to answer comprehension questions (5/7 teachers).

Conclusion: How are teachers teaching listening?

With some eclectica. Their repertoire for Top-down: Use of comprehension questions, cloze, textbook activities, prediction, gist, explanations in L2, news, songs, videos, visual aids, elicitation of content (heard), reading aloud, and interaction in L2. Bottom-up: teachers used their own voices, pronunciation, phonetics, phonics, phonology, prosody, script, dictation, shadowing, singing, and textbook dialogue.

Sample lesson plans

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>From T1</th>
<th>From T2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• State the aims of the lesson</td>
<td>• Read IPA pronunciation of key words</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Vocabulary (core and other)</td>
<td>• Listen &amp; repeat script</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Reading activities</td>
<td>• Shadowing (the script)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Follow the textbook</td>
<td>• Comprehension questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>◦ Read instructions</td>
<td>◦ Homework: dictation from the textbook CD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>◦ Teacher demonstrates</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>◦ Play CD</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>◦ Check answers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>◦ Explain difficult points</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>◦ Extra activities (if needed or time avail*)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

IPA: International Phonetic Alphabet

References