

How teachers teach listening in Japan: Part I

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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 /rəʊ.bɒt/, but Japanese students expect to hear /rɒ.bb.tɒ/. 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

From T1	From T2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State the aims of the lesson • Vocabulary (core and other) • Reading activities • Follow the textbook <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Read instructions ◦ Teacher demonstrates ◦ Play CD ◦ Check answers ◦ Explain difficult points • Extra activities (if needed or time avail') 	(who prefers authentic material) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read IPA pronunciation of key words • Listen & repeat script • Shadowing (the script) • Comprehension questions • Homework: dictation from the textbook CD IPA: International Phonetic Alphabet

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