

## Strategies for Facilitating Listening Skills among Foreign Language Learners in US Universities

**Dishari Chattaraj**

Indiana University Bloomington,  
USA  
Christ (Deemed to be University),  
Bangalore, India

**Abstract.** Developing from the thesis that understanding is the key to any and all meaningful conversation/s, this study focuses on the facilitation of listening skills among foreign language learners. It is conducted with the objective to find out the most effective ways in which an instructor can enable the development of listening skills among the learners of a foreign language. This paper reports the findings of an empirical study which followed a cross-sectional research design and employed a survey method to elicit the data. Twenty-seven Foreign Language Instructors/ Associate Instructors teaching around thirteen different foreign languages across sixteen different universities in the United States of America participated and reported to a survey on effective pre-listening, listening, and post-listening tasks, activities, and strategies which they found to be the most powerful in their respective classrooms. Thirteen of the Seventeen strategies and or/ tasks which were provided in the Strategies for Facilitating Listening (SFL) questionnaire were rated to be highly effective in the facilitation of the development of listening skills among the learners. The paper after discussing the efficacies of the strategies and tasks at hand ends by analyzing the pedagogical implications of the findings.

**Keywords:** comprehension skills; foreign language teaching; higher education; listening skills; listening strategies

### 1. Introduction

Mastering a language has always been about mastering the four key skills i.e. Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing (Burns & Siegel, 2017). Though Listening forms the basis of acquisition of further skills in the domain of language acquisition and/or learning, not much focus has been paid to the teaching of this skill in the domain of either Second or Foreign language learning and teaching. While there have been language teaching approaches like Silent Way which provided learners a stipulated period of time just to observe and absorb linguistic inputs without the stress of producing any output (Gattegno, 2010), and the Total

Physical Response (TPR) that focused on explaining and communicating in a strictly non-verbal way using just gestures and physical movements (Astutik & Megawati, 2019), they lack popularity and significance in the field of language teaching. There exists an alternative method of language teaching known as Comprehension Approach grounded in the theories of language acquisition and learning propounded by Krashen (2004) and Asher (2000) both of whom wanted to teach the second language in the model of the first language. However, this approach definitely did not enjoy the popularity which Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) enjoys in the field in the contemporary language teaching and learning contexts; while CLT is widely implemented in classes and represented in literature (Richards, 2005), the same can't be said about the Comprehension Approach.

With the focus on communication and production, listening and comprehension have definitely not taken a lead in language classes. One of the main reason why listening is not a favorite skill to teach is because it is non-tangible and not directly assessable/measurable; the other quasi-psychological justification to not teach listening in the foreign language classroom is the idea learners acquire the skill in their first language without much fuss, and given this logic, the foreign language learners are bound to pick up the skill sooner or later (Field, 2008). The interpretive skill of listening, though important in its own right, has also been considered by researchers and language instructors as a passive skill (Johnson, 2008; Vandergrift, 2011). It has always been treated as a subsidiary to spoken skills and the main motivation behind teaching listening skill was not to improve understanding and comprehension but to improve pronunciation in the target language (Vandergrift, 2011). However, the interpretive skill of listening not only provides the structure or base for the growth and development of performance oriented interpersonal and presentational skills but it also enhances the linguistic competence in the learners. Thus, it is important not only to focus on the linguistic product or output but on the process in which acquisition of listening skill takes place (Vandergrift & Goh, 2009).

This study, thus, is a shift from the recent studies in product-oriented language teaching approach which focus only on communicative tasks and performances. The main objective of the study is to document and analyze the effective strategies and tasks that facilitate the growth and development of listening skills among the learners of multiple foreign languages. The study specifically reports the findings of an empirical study in which 27 Foreign Language Instructors/ Associate Instructors across 16 different universities in the United States of America participated. The study seeks to answer the following research questions:

- i) Are Foreign Language Instructors across institutes of higher education in the United States of America using pre-listening, listening, and post-listening tasks/activities/strategies to facilitate the development of listening skills among the learners?
- ii) Is there a balance in the use of these?
- iii) What are the most popular strategies/activities/tasks for the development of listening skills?

iv) Is there a possibility of implementing the Comprehension Approach to teaching by adding the dimension of interpretive listening to it?

The testing hypothesis for the study is: The Foreign Language instructors will have a balanced approach in employing pre-listening, listening, and, post-listening strategies while teaching listening skills to Foreign Language learners.

## **2. Literature Review**

Though listening comprehension according to Vandergrift (1999) plays a key role in facilitating language learning, Nunan (2002) points out that for long, listening skill has been ignored by language teachers. In fact, listening skills have so far been overlooked as compared to reading, writing and speaking skills in the domain of language teaching and learning (Mendelson, 2000; Vandergrift & Goh, 2012). Listening skill became a focus-area of study only in the 1960s when the focus of language teaching shifted to the development of oral skills (Nunan, 2002). It further gained importance in the '80s after Krashen developed his theory of Input Hypothesis and was reinforced by Ashers' (1988) Total Physical Approach method of language teaching. Gary (1975) observes that if attention is given to listening comprehension at the early stages of language learning/teaching, it provides advantages of four kinds i.e. cognitive, efficiency, utility and affective. This in turn holistically provides a comprehensive understanding of the target language for the learner thereby making the experience of foreign language learning meaningful and fulfilling.

There a significant body of research has been conducted to understand the cognitive and psycholinguistic aspects of listening (Clark & Clark, 1977; Demyankon, 1983). However, research in the field of teaching or facilitating listening skills among the learners in a language classroom is only a handful. This section on literature review is thus divided into three parts. The first part provides a comprehensive and brief overview of the few significant and popular psycholinguistic models of listening. The second part provides an overview of studies conducted specifically in the domain of teaching or facilitating listening skills among the learners in a language classroom, more specifically in foreign language classrooms. The third and last part of this section briefly discusses the Foreign Language teaching scenario in institutes of higher education across the United States of America.

### **Understanding and Comprehending Listening**

Rost (1991) points out that understanding and comprehension is a multi-layered task and he makes reference to the Relevance Theory postulated by Sperber and Wilson, (1982, 1986) which conceives communication to be a collaborative process that involves the process of ostension i.e. the production of signals by a speaker and inference i.e. the contextualization of signals by a hearer. Rost further elaborates that both the acts of locution and illocution are important in order to infer and construct meaning in order to meaningfully conduct the act of perlocution by the interlocutor. He then discusses how it is significant to train the learners in ways in which they not only understand the denotative meaning of a word or a phrase but have a clear idea of the connotative meaning as well.

Listening is often perceived to be a simple task; however, literature shows that in order to be an efficient listener one needs to have a deep knowledge of not only the language but also the culture otherwise the process of meaning-making becomes highly restrictive and shallow. Demyankov (1983) proposed a model of understanding which comprised six stages. Acquisition of the linguistic framework of the target language, construction and verification of hypothetical interpretations of what is heard, deciphering the speaker's intentions, assimilation of the spoken message, coordination of the speakers' and the listener's motivation to participate in the conversation, and, discernment of the tone of the message.

The model, though structured, has been criticized for not considering the fact that a listener always involves in a conversation with a purpose and often the purpose is not ideal i.e. the interlocutor doesn't listen with the intention to comprehend what the speaker is saying. Another model, given by Clark and Clark (1977), is rooted in cognitive linguistics, based on empirical evidence, this model is credited with the ability to provide a comprehensive psychological description for verbal understanding. The stages of this model are provided below:

1. The hearer receives the raw speech and retains its phonological representation in their working memory.
2. An attempt is made on the part of the language processor to organize the phonological representation into constituents, identifying their content and function.
3. As the act of identification of constituents is carried on, the language processor uses it to construct underlying propositions, thereby incessantly constructing a hierarchical representation of propositions.
4. After having identified the proposition for a constituent, they retain them in working memory and at one-point purge memory of the phonological representation. As a result of this, the language processor forgets the exact word and retains just the meaning.

This model is criticized because it conceives the hearer/ interlocutor to be a language processor thereby dissociating her/him from the context of the speech i.e. the interactive context and denying the transactional nature of human communication and rendering it a mechanized connotation better suited for the purpose of machine-learning and communication. The idea that emerges out of all the cognitive and psycholinguistic models of listening is that it is a complex process that requires a multilayered understanding of language and culture. One becomes an efficient interlocutor only by being a part of the linguistic community and culture; a formal classroom set-up thus becomes highly limiting in this context. However limiting it is, a significantly large number of learners across the United States of America and the world learn foreign languages within the formal classroom set-ups and it is in such a scenario that the findings of the current study become extremely important as it provides insights into the effective ways of facilitating the faculty of listening among foreign language learners in a typically restricted formal set-up.

### **Listening in the Language Classroom**

Brown (2006) while discussing the hacks of teaching effective listening skills points out that building on learners' prior knowledge is a key factor which leads to success among the learners as "Prior knowledge is organized in schemata (the plural form of schema): abstract, generalized mental representations of our experience that are available to help us understand new experiences." (pp 37). Graham (2017) reports a study where 78% of the foreign language instructors in England agreed upon reminding learners previously-learned vocabulary items which relates to the new topic. Other important strategies that promote effective listening skills among learners according to Brown (2006) are first, systematic presentation of main ideas i.e. the learners should have a clear idea of what they are learning if the learning objective is clearly stated and the keywords highlighted, the learners will learn better and faster. Secondly, the learners must be encouraged to look for details and thirdly they must be encouraged to make inferences by listening between the lines. Brown (2006) also suggests that integrating authentic materials in teaching like videos and interviews enhances the motivation and interest of the learners and makes them listen closely to the audio-visual material. He concludes his paper with the assertion that an effective listening exercise will incorporate both open and close-ended tasks and should be followed by exercises and tasks in the domain of speaking thereby providing a context for recycling and reusing the lexical/syntactic structures learned during the listening session. What Brown (2006) is pointing over here is that the interpretive task should be followed by activities in the domain of interpersonal and/or presentational modes thereby providing the students a range of arenas to practice what they have learned; a similar thread of thoughts also originates in Nation (2009) that focuses on the reciprocal skills of listening and speaking skills in foreign and second language learning contexts which are understood to be interconnected skills that compliment each other in the present context of language learning (Newton, 2016).

Field (2008) provides a format for a listening lesson for teaching English as a Second Language. However, the model he provides can be replicated to teach any language and hence deserves a mention in this section. The model proposed by Field (2008) is definitely comprehensive and combined with task-based activities and incorporation of authentic materials would lead to an effective lesson in the foreign language classroom using the Comprehension Approach to language teaching. However, Field (2008) points out that efforts must be made so that the lesson doesn't turn highly teacher-centric or an isolating endeavor and the learner should be provided limited input and provided time to process the information. The lesson should be process-oriented and not product-oriented which means emphasis should be given to pre-listening and listening tasks as much as post-listening tasks. Sendag et al. (2018) while mentioning the importance of repetition in teaching listening skills also mention the effort must be made to limit the content and provide the learners with extracurricular listening activities. It is also important to note here that it is a popular strategy to focus more on socially motivated contexts while planning listening activities than just on the linguistic aspects of the target language (Brown, 1998).

Rost (2011) mentions that there exist six different types of listening practices; they are Intensive (focus on phonology, syntax, lexis), Selective (focus on main ideas, pre-set tasks), Interactive (focus on becoming active listener, attempt to clarify meaning or form), Extensive (focusing on listening continuously, managing large amount of listening input), Responsive (focus on learner response to input), Autonomous (focus on learner management of progress, navigation, task selection, etc.). After a comprehensive analysis of literature on listening instruction, Rost concluded that balanced listening instruction should include all these six types of practices. Incorporation of all these practices would require the instructors to design tasks and implement strategies. Along with tasks and strategies, the literature is also replete with the importance of providing scaffolding materials to make the process of listening more effective (Ahmadi & Rozati, 2017).

Vandergrift has most extensively worked on strategy use in the domain of listening. Vandergrift (1999) devises a performance checklist for pre-listening, listening and post-listening tasks. The questionnaire consists of 8 questions (yes/no) each in the pre and post-listening checklist groups and 6 questions in the listening comprehension group; also there are 4 open-ended questions in the checklist. Graham (2006) also conducted a study on the perceptions held regarding listening comprehension by 595 English students learning French aged 16-18 years. Providing feedback, discussing task-discrepancies, and setting future goals of learning fall under the domain of post-listening. These are in fact effective language teaching strategies in general (Vattøy & Smith, 2019), but so far, there has been no study in the domain of teaching listening that throws light on these strategies. Contemporary studies in the domain of listening mostly focus on the learners and their abilities to develop the faculty of listening (Kok, 2018) and not much emphasis is put on the facilitation of the skill in a formal setup and this is exactly where the findings of the present study become important. However, before reporting the findings of the study, the subsequent paragraphs focus on the Foreign Language Teaching scenario in the United States of America which is where the present study is situated.

### **Foreign Language Teaching in the US Higher Education System**

In an increasingly neoliberal world, where mobility is highly fluid, Foreign Language Teaching gained impetus and prominence mostly in the first decade of the 21st century in the context of higher education in the United States of America. While the United States of America has a prominent history of teaching Foreign Languages (FL) since the early 1960s, globalization and 9/11 attacks furthered the need for teaching FL in the higher education institutes as there was a general consensus among scholars and administrators that there is a need to understand other cultures and languages (Yankelovich, 2005). In a study conducted in 2006 by the Modern Language Association (MLA), 2654 institutions of higher education across the states reported having enrolments for languages other than English (Furnam et al. 2007). The study grouped the languages into two groups on the basis of the number of enrolments i.e. Most Commonly Taught Languages and Less Commonly Taught Languages. While the Most Commonly Taught Languages list includes 14 languages, the Less Commonly Taught Languages list includes as many as 204 languages. The report also notes that a growing trend is

noticed both in the number of languages taught and in the enrolment of students. A similar study was conducted by the MLA in 2016 (Looney & Lusin, 2019) in which 2547 institutions of higher education participated and a total of 15 Most Commonly Taught Languages and 310 Less Commonly Taught Languages were reported to be taught. Thus, clearly, an exponential growth in the number of Foreign Languages offered by higher educational institutes across the USA can be noticed in a period of the last ten years.

The Modern Language Association released a memorandum based on the aforementioned report in 2006 on their website urging universities across the states to make Foreign Language learning compulsory across undergraduate, graduate and Ph.D. programs. They also emphasized that the teaching of FL should be situated in cultural, historical, geographic and cross-cultural frames incorporating transcultural and translingual reflection at every level of learning and teaching. Students and faculty exchange in the context of FL learning is also vehemently advocated for in the document. Support in the domain of instructors is provided by The United States Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs by funding the Fulbright Foreign Language Teaching Assistantship (FLTA) Program in which native speakers in multiple languages across 50 different countries obtain a chance to bring their native speaker competence to institutes of higher education across the United States of America as they join these institutes for one academic year as an instructor or associate instructor. Thus, it can be seen that there is increasing recognition for the need of teaching Foreign Languages across higher educational institutes in the United States of America and, it is furthered by associations such as the MLA and the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL).

### **The gap in Literature**

The gap that emerges from the analysis of literature so far is that though the need for teaching Foreign Languages is well established, there is a discrepancy between the theory and practice when it comes to research in the domain of Listening Skill as can be seen in the first two sections of literature review. Listening is a teacher-oriented activity and in the present paradigm of teaching that completely focuses on the learners, none of the studies so far could be located that directly address the instructors' perception of the use of various listening tasks and/or strategies in a Foreign Language teaching context as the one the present study deals with. All the works that discuss the aspect of teaching listening, as can be seen in the second section of literature review, are mostly reflective research, unlike the present study which reports the findings of an empirical study about best practices in facilitating listening faculty among the learners.

## **3. Methodology**

### **Research Design**

The study at hand follows a cross-sectional research design; the cross-sectional approach is a very popular approach in language teaching-learning studies as it is an economical way to obtain information in a short period of time (Phakiti, 2015). It is a quantitative study based on primary data that employed a survey methodology to collect the data. The data for the study was elicited by means of

a questionnaire (Appendix 1) named Strategies for Facilitating Listening (SFL) which was designed for this study. The SFL consisted 17 items (6 pre-listening, 4 listening, 7 post-listening) and is highly reliable as a data eliciting instrument as it generated a value of 0.89 in Cronbach's Alpha test.

### Setting and Participants

The research instrument was circulated among foreign language instructors/associate instructors across different 16 universities that among many other universities in the United States of America hosts Fulbright Foreign Language Teaching Assistants (FLTA) (Indiana University Bloomington, University of Utah, Yale University, University of Michigan, Central State University Ohio, Wake Forest University, University of Kansas, University of Arkansas, Northern Illinois University, Webster University, University of Texas at Austin, University of Louisville, New York University, Gardner Webb University, Agnes Scott College, and, University of Texas at San Antonio). The instructors/associate instructors were all native speakers of the languages they were teaching and were part of a Fulbright Foreign Language Teaching Assistantship (FLTA) program in the academic year 2019-2020, an academic community of which the researcher was also a part. They were personally approached by the researcher through email and requested to complete the questionnaire. The languages which were taught by these instructors were Arabic, Bangla, Bahasa Indonesia, Burmese, French, Finnish, Hindi, Kazakh, Spanish, Swahili, Thai, Turkish, and, Urdu.

## 4. Results

This section is subdivided into three sub-sections. The first subsection deals with pre-listening instruction, the second subsection deals with listening instruction, and the third subsection deals with post-listening instruction related activities and strategies.

**Table 1. Pre-listening Instruction**

Strategies	Mean	SD
I provide my learners with audio-visual content by native speakers on the new topic	3.4	1.08
I orally revise what I have taught in the previous class before introducing a new topic	4	1.07
I provide an oral list of questions relating to the topic before I start teaching it	3.51	1.34
I provide a written list of questions relating to the topic before I start teaching it	3.22	1
I provide an oral list of vocabulary items before I start teaching a new topic	3.59	1.5
I provide a written list of vocabulary items before I start teaching a new topic	3.89	1.25
Average	3.6	0.86

*Note.* This table provides information on the mean and standard deviation on the use of pre-listening strategies by foreign language instructors.



As the table shows, the most frequently reported pre-listening strategy is the strategy of revision which also has a comparatively lower SD value. Providing a list of vocabulary items before introducing a new topic is also reported to be a frequently used strategy and this provides the learners with clarity and better comprehension as once the instruction on listening starts, they know exactly what to look for. Providing an oral list of questions is also marked to be a strategy used frequently; however, the strategy of providing a written list is not popular. However, the high SD of the former strategy points to the fact that it is not an unanimously popular pre-listening strategy. The question of providing audio-visual content, however, did not generate a response that was expected and it also has a comparatively lower SD indicating that it is generally unpopular among instructors. Audio-visual aids are deemed to be highly useful in the context of teaching a foreign language and the instructors did not respond to it with absolute enthusiasm. Overall, the instructors have reported using the pre-listening strategies frequently and the responses are also not varied as is indicated by a low SD, thereby, confirming that this stage is very important for the advancement into and the progress of the next two stages.

**Table 2. Listening Instruction**

Strategies	Mean	SD
I repeat the listening exercise at least 3 times before I provide any kind of assignment	3.55	1
I encourage the learners to demonstrate new words physically before they actually speak it out loud	3.18	1.7
I make the learners repeat new sounds/ words after I finish reading the text in class	3.92	0.95
I provide the learners with the group/ pair activities to practice the new sounds/ words	4.51	0.8
Average	3.79	0.72

*Note.* This table provides information on the mean and standard deviation on the use of listening strategies by foreign language instructors.

The table above shows that the instructors have overall reported using three of the four listening instruction-related strategies quite frequently. The most frequently used strategy was providing the learners with group/pair activities to practice the new sounds/words. This strategy is actually an integrative strategy that combines the interpretive mode with interpersonal mode. The low SD in the response also points out that it is a unanimously popular strategy in teaching listening skill. Repetition is crucial when it comes to teaching new sounds/words and no wonder both the strategies related to repetition generated a positive response. The only strategy which was reported to be used less frequently is the use of gestures to convey new words. Though it is an efficient strategy for teaching listening, this strategy can be really time-consuming and that could be one of the reasons why it is not popular among the instructors. However, it is interesting to note that this strategy generated the most diverse response among the

respondents as the high SD indicates thereby establishing the fact that there are some instructors who exhaustively use this strategy.

**Table 3. Post-Listening Instruction**

Strategies	Mean	SD
I provide the learners with a listening comprehension exercise once the teaching and practicing session is over	4	0.9
I provide the learners with a reading comprehension exercise once the teaching and practicing session is over	3.88	1
I provide my learners with scaffolding materials (cheat sheet etc.) for the tasks/ assignments	3.48	1.31
I provide the learners with exercises like information-gap, true/ false, multiple-choice etc. after I complete teaching the piece on listening	3.7	0.95
I provide the learners with role-playing or task-oriented/ problem-solving activities after I complete teaching the piece on listening	4.22	0.75
I discuss the discrepancies I notice during the tasks immediately after the task is over	3.92	0.95
I discuss/ set future learning goals with regards to the mode of listening as we complete the episode/ lesson on listening	3.96	1.12
Average	3.88	0.69

*Note.* This table provides information on the mean and standard deviation on the use of post-listening strategies by foreign language instructors.

This section on post-listening which had seven questions endeavors to find out the most frequently used assessment strategies instructors implement in order to understand the comprehension of their learners as well as make the teaching more interactive. As the table shows, the practice of providing a listening comprehension exercise immediately after the lesson is a very frequently used practice and both have SDs in similar range. What is interesting here is to note that providing learners with a reading comprehension exercise is also a popular approach and this approach can be taken if the language has a script the learners are already familiar with. The tasks of role-play/ problem-solving activities are more popular compared to info-gap and true-false exercises to measure learners' listening skills. The strategy of providing scaffolding materials is not popular among the instructors. Discussing the discrepancies immediately after the task and setting future learning goals are also popular strategies as has been reported by the instructors. However the task of discussing discrepancies show a lower SD as compared to the other strategy thereby indicating that it is more popular among the instructors. The strategy on scaffolding has yielded a lower response though it has a higher SD which shows that it is used frequently by some of the instructors. Overall, the instructors thus have reported using the post-listening tasks/ strategies highly frequently.

Other strategies which the instructors reported to be useful for facilitating the development of listening skills as a part of the open-ended question in this survey in the domain of Listening were providing built-in helps for difficult words in the audio that help learners save time and move on to the listening task without breaking the flow and pace of comprehension, providing audio textbooks; and in the domain of Post-listening were organizing conversation tables and cultural festivals to provide an environment as would be found in the target linguistic community, incorporating artistic expression by encouraging the students to draw/doodle their responses after a listening activity instead of speaking.

**Table 4. Anova: Single Factor**

SUMMARY						
<i>Groups</i>	<i>Count</i>	<i>Sum</i>	<i>Average</i>	<i>Variance</i>		
Column 1	27	97.33333	3.604938	0.74818		
Column 2	27	102.5	3.796296	0.524217		
Column 3	27	104.8571	3.883598	0.478865		
ANOVA						
<i>Source of Variation</i>	<i>SS</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>P-value</i>	<i>F crit</i>
Between Groups	1.097016	2	0.548508	0.939622	0.395153	3.113792
Within Groups	45.5328	78	0.583754			
Total	46.62981	80				

*Note.* This table provides information on the ANOVA test result for pre-listening, listening, and, post-listening strategies enlisted in the SFL questionnaire.

The study which focuses on pre-listening, listening and post-listening tasks show that on an average the instructors reported using all the three categories of listening strategies i.e. pre-listening (m=3.6), listening (m=3.79), and, post-listening (m=3.88) frequently. The table produced above, from the ANOVA test conducted to understand whether there is a statistically significant difference between the three categories, shows that there isn't any statistically significant difference (p=0.3). Thus, it can be said that the instructors are providing a balanced instruction when it comes to imparting listening skills thus proving the testing hypothesis of the study to be true.

## 5. Discussions

The popularity of the pre-listening strategy of revision (m=4) is in sync with the literature discussed (Brown, 2006) above which asserts that it is always better to build on existing knowledge. The contrast in responses between the strategies of providing an oral list (m=3.51) and a written list (m=3.22) shows that while teaching listening, the instructors prefer providing an oral list of questions which in turn enhances the amount of input in the target lesson. This activity also

initiates the learners to think and question what they are learning thereby making them aware as learners. This finding is in alignment with the Comprehension Approach by Krashen (2004) which emphasizes on comprehensible oral input. Though audi-visual aids have been noted in literature to be effective in enhancing interpretive skills by exposing the learners to the target culture and language (Brown, 2006), the comparatively lower response of the same among the respondents of this study ( $m=3.4$ ) provides the need to initiate further enquiry. However, it is not justified to draw a conclusion about the same without knowing how much content is available on the internet in the target language.

It has been seen in the literature that listening instruction has the potential to become highly teacher-centric and isolating (Field, 2008); the enormous popularity of the strategy of providing the learners with group/pair activities ( $m=4.51$ ) proves that the instructors actually focus on making the learning experience highly engaging for the learners. The popularity of both the strategies of repetition is in alignment with the literature (Sendag et al., 2018) and points out the importance of memory skills in the domain of foreign language learning. The strategy of demonstrating words physically before speaking it aloud is inspired by the TPR approach (Asher, 2008). This strategy with a low mean ( $m=3.18$ ) and high SD (1.7) provides confusing responses that seek further investigation.

Literature shows that an effective lesson in listening instruction is always followed by a range of open/close-ended activities that provides instances for recycling or reusing the structural/lexical items learned in the process (Field, 2008) and the overall high frequency reported for the use of post-listening strategies is indicative of that ( $m=3.88$ ). However, the popularity of providing reading comprehension exercises after providing training in listening ( $m=3.88$ ) raises questions about the way instructors map assignments with skills taught. The popularity of both the methods of the assessment i.e. listening comprehension ( $m=4$ ) and reading comprehension show that the instructors are not differentiating between the two interpretive approaches of listening and reading but how successful the approach of testing a skill different from the one that has been taught deserves further investigations. Further, the popularity of socially motivated role play and task-oriented problem-solving activities ( $m=4.22$ ) over linguistically oriented information-gap and multiple choice questions ( $m=3.7$ ) show that the findings of the study are in alignment with the literature (Brown, 1998). The low use of scaffolding strategy ( $m=3.48$ ) which otherwise is a very popular strategy in teaching listening and comprehension skills (Ahmadi & Rozati, 2017) seeks further enquiry. The popularity of both the strategies of discussing discrepancies and gaining feedback on listening tasks ( $m=3.92$ ), and, setting future goals ( $m=3.96$ ) shows that these strategies are useful for teaching listening skills, just as they are for teaching any of the language skills (Vattøy & Smith, 2019).

## 6. Conclusion

This study shows the instructors of Foreign Languages across multiple universities in the United States of America have a balanced approach for imparting listening skills to the learners. Besides successfully documenting and

analyzing the effective strategies and tasks that facilitate the growth and development of listening skills among the learners of multiple foreign languages, the study raises questions about whether there is a scope to apply the Comprehension Approach to language teaching. Though further investigations are required in the area to understand how much time is spent to teach the interpretive mode of communication under the present approach which is highly driven by the act or the production of communication rather than the process of the same, the findings of the study provides an impetus for the initiation of the practice of Comprehension Approach for the facilitation of listening skills among foreign language learners. Though there has not been a rich body of research in the field of listening instruction and strategies because of the contemporary paradigm in language learning which is highly conversation oriented, the study at hand shows that foreign language instructors across the country are actively involved in the teaching of the skill. The Comprehension Approach to language teaching, which is chiefly centered around providing an impetus for the development of listening skills, was highly criticized for not involving the learners and making them non-participant individuals whose goal is to just comprehend and not respond in any way. In spite of its limitation, it is an effective approach as it provides importance to comprehension which is the base for the development of the rest of the linguistic skills in a language. By incorporating the interactive aspect to listening and combining the interpersonal and presentational modes to this interpretive mode of teaching, the overall practice of teaching a foreign language would attain completion. In fact, Comprehension Approach could operate along the sides of the Communication Approach to enable the learners to attain a holistic competence in the field of foreign language learning.

### **7. Practical Implications, Research Limitations and Future Projections**

The findings of this study provides impetus to Foreign Language instructors across the United States of America with a set of effective strategies that can be applied to facilitate the development of Listening Skills among the learners. The findings of this study is, in fact, useful for Foreign Language instructors from across the globe who are teaching adult learners the language outside the linguistic community where it is actually spoken. Foreign Language instructors can use the findings of this study to make their lessons pertaining to listening skills more impactful by integrating the interactive listening approach. Further, the findings of the study could be used by teacher-trainers who conduct various orientation programs and provide instructors with strategy-training for enhancing the quality of teaching.

The present study covers a range of Foreign Languages across language families as well as a number of universities, however, the number of participants are not high. Moreover, the reporting of strategy by a survey method has its own limitations and this limitation can be overcome by coupling the survey with observation and interview method. A longitudinal approach can be taken to understand how instructors apply listening strategies differently to suit the needs of their learners. Research interventions are also required to categorize and understand teaching strategies and tasks that have the potential to make listening interpretive. Further, the findings of the study throws light on how certain

strategies which enjoy general popularity in the literature pertaining to teaching listening skills are not used exhaustively. This opens up possibilities for future research in the area. Interventions are required in the domain of use of gestures and providing scaffolding materials for teaching of listening skills by Foreign Language instructors. The effective use of audio-visual aids in the context of teaching listening, especially in the recent context of language teaching which is globally affected by the pandemic, could be an emerging area of research in its own right. In this ever-changing-world, where communication is being redefined by the changing realities brought upon by the global pandemic, the Comprehension Approach deserves a serious reconsideration as more than ever, the world needs to listen and comprehend more than it communicates.

## 8. References

- Ahmadi, S. M., & Rozati, F. (2017). The impact of scaffolding and nonscaffolding strategies on the EFL learners' listening comprehension development. *The Journal of Educational Research*, 110(5), 447-456. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00220671.2015.1118004>
- Asher, J. (2000). *Learning another language through actions: The complete teacher's guidebook*. Los Gatos: CA: Sky Oaks Productions. (Sixth edition).
- Astutik, Y., Aulina, C. N., & Megawati, F. (2019). Total Physical Response (TPR): How is it used to Teach EFL Young Learners?. *International Journal of Learning, Teaching and Educational Research*, 18(1), 92-103. <https://doi.org/10.26803/ijlter.18.1.7>
- Brown, S. (1998). Experienced and Inexperienced ESL Teachers' Lesson Planning for a Listening Activity. *The Educational Resources Information Centre*. The USA.
- Brown, S. (2006). *Teaching listening*, 5(1), 36-39. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Burns, A., & Siegel, J. (Eds.). (2017). *International Perspectives on Teaching the Four Skills in ELT: Listening, Speaking, Reading, Writing*. Springer. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-63444-9>
- Clark, H., & Clark, E. (1977). *Psychology and Language*. New York: HBJ.
- Demyankov, V. Z. (1983). Understanding as interpreting activity. *The problems of linguistics*, 6, 58-76.
- Field, J. (2008). *Listening in the Language Classroom*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Furman, N., Goldberg, D., & Lusin, N. (2007). Enrollments in Languages Other than English in United States Institutions of Higher Education, Fall 2006. MLA Web Publication: 1-28. <https://doi.org/10.1632/adfl.39.2.66>
- Gary, J. O. (1975). Delayed oral practice in initial stages of second language learning. *On TESOL*, 75, 89-95.
- Gattegno, C. (2010). *Teaching foreign languages in schools: The silent way*. Educational Solutions World.
- Graham, S. (2006). Listening comprehension: The learners' perspective. *System*, 34(2), 165-182. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2005.11.001>
- Graham, S. (2017). Research into practice: Listening strategies in an instructed classroom setting. *Language Teaching*, 50(1), 107-119. <https://doi.org/10.1017/s0261444816000306>
- Johnson, K. (2008). *An introduction to foreign language learning and teaching*. Pearson Education. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315734675>

- Kök, İ. (2018). Relationship between listening comprehension strategy use and listening comprehension proficiency. *International Journal of Listening* 32(3), 163-179. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10904018.2016.1276457>
- Krashen, S. (2004, November). The comprehension hypothesis. In *13th International Symposium and Book Fair on Language Teaching (English Teachers Association of the Republic of China), Taipei, Taiwan*. Retrieved on November 28, 2019, from [http://www.sdkrashen.com/content/articles/eta\\_paper.pdf](http://www.sdkrashen.com/content/articles/eta_paper.pdf)
- Looney, D., & Lusin, N. (2019, June). Enrollments in languages other than English in United States institutions of higher education, Summer 2016 and Fall 2016. In *Modern Language Association*. Modern Language Association. 26 Broadway 3rd Floor, New York, NY 10004-1789.
- Mendelson, D. J. (2000). *Learning to Listen: A Strategy Based Approach for Second Language Learner*. Dorling Kindersley Limited.
- Nation, I. (2006). How large a vocabulary is needed for reading and listening? *Canadian modern language review*, 63(1), 59-82. <https://doi.org/10.3138/cmlr.63.1.59>
- Newton, J. (2016). Teaching language skills. *The Routledge handbook of English language teaching*, 428-440. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315676203>
- Nunan, D. (2002). Listening in language learning. *Methodology in language teaching: An anthology of current practice*, 238-241. <https://doi.org/10.1017/cbo9780511667190.032>
- Phakiti, A. (2015). *Experimental research methods in language learning*. Bloomsbury Publishing.
- Richards, J. C. (2005). *Communicative language teaching today* (pp. 22-26). Singapore: SEAMEO Regional Language Centre.
- Rost, M. (1991). *Listening in action*. New Jersey: Prentice Hall.
- Rost, M. (2011). *Teaching and Researching Listening*. United Kingdom: Longman. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ijal.12003>
- Şendağ, S., Gedik, N., & Toker, S. (2018). Impact of repetitive listening, listening-aid and podcast length on EFL podcast listening. *Computers & Education*, 125, 273-283. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.compedu.2018.06.019>
- Vandergrift, L. (1999). Facilitating second language listening comprehension: Acquiring successful strategies. *ELT Journal*, 53(3), 168-176. <https://doi.org/10.1093/elt/53.3.168>
- Vandergrift, L., & Goh, C. (2009). 22 Teaching and Testing Listening Comprehension. *The handbook of language teaching*, 395-411. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781444315783.ch22>
- Vandergrift, L. (2011). Listening: theory and practice in modern foreign language competence. *ERIC Clearinghouse on Languages*. Washington, DC: Center for Applied Linguistics. Retrieved on December 4, 2019, from <https://www.llas.ac.uk/resources/gpg/67>.
- Vandergrift, L., & Goh, C. C. (2012). *Teaching and learning second language listening: Metacognition in action*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203843376>
- Vattøy, K. D., & Smith, K. (2019). Students' perceptions of teachers' feedback practice in teaching English as a foreign language. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 85, 260-268. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2019.06.024>
- Yankelovich, D. (2005). Ferment and Change: Higher Education. *ADFL, ADFL Bulletin*, 7-26.

## Appendix 1

# Strategies for Facilitating Listening (SFL)

## Questionnaire

All the questions are mandatory.

There are no right or wrong answers to the questions.

Choose the option that describes your teaching style the best.

\* Required

1. I provide my learners with audio-visual content by native speakers on the new topic before I introduce it in class \*

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Never	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Always

2. I orally revise what I have taught in the previous class before introducing a new topic \*

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Never	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Always

3. I provide an oral list of questions relating to the topic before I start teaching it \*

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Never	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Always



4. I provide a written list of questions relating to the topic before I start teaching it \*

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Never	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Always

5. I provide an oral list of vocabulary items before I start teaching a new topic \*

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Never	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Always

6. I provide a written list of vocabulary items before I start teaching a new topic \*

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Never	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Always

7. I repeat the listening exercise at least 3 times before I provide any kind of assignment \*

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Never	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Always

8. I encourage the learners to demonstrate new words physically before they actually speak it out loud \*

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Never	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Always

9. I make the learners repeat new sounds/ words after I finish reading the text in class \*

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Never	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Always

10. I provide the learners with the group/ pair activities to practice the new sounds/ words \*

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Never	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Always

11. I provide the learners with a listening comprehension exercise once the teaching and practicing session is over \*

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Never	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Always

12. I provide the learners with a reading comprehension exercise once the teaching and practicing session is over \*

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Never	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Always

13. I provide my learners with scaffolding materials (cheat sheet etc.) for the tasks/assignments \*

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Never	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Always

14. I provide the learners with exercises like information-gap, true/false, multiple-choice etc. after I complete teaching the piece on listening \*

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Never	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Always

15. I provide the learners with role-playing or task-oriented/ problem-solving activities after I complete teaching the piece on listening \*

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Never	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Always

16. I discuss the discrepancies I notice during the tasks immediately after the task is over \*

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Never	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Always

17. I discuss/ set future learning goals with regards to the mode of listening as we complete the episode/ lesson on listening \*

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Never	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Always

18. Kindly mention any other strategies you found to be typically useful for promoting/ facilitating listening skills in the language you teach among the learners

---

---

---

---

---

This content is neither created nor endorsed by Google.

Google Forms