

# Teaching Listening: From Comprehension to Acquisition

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## INTRODUCTION

The teaching of listening has attracted a greater level of interest in recent years than it did in the past. University entrance exams, school leaving and other examinations now often include a listening component, acknowledging that listening skills are a core component of second language proficiency, and also reflecting the assumption that if listening isn't tested, teachers won't teach it. Earlier views of listening saw it as the mastery of discrete skills or microskills, such as recognizing reduced forms of words, recognizing cohesive devices in texts, and identifying key words in a text, and that these skills should form the focus of teaching. Later views of listening drew on the field of cognitive psychology, which introduced the notions of bottom-up and top-down processing and to the role of prior knowledge and schema in comprehension. Listening came to be seen as an interpretive process. At the same time the field of discourse analysis and conversational analysis revealed a great deal about the nature and organization of spoken discourse and led to a realization that written texts read aloud could not provide a suitable basis for developing the abilities needed to process real-time authentic discourse. Current views of listening hence emphasize the role of the listener, who is seen an active participant in listening, employing strategies to facilitate, monitor, and evaluate his or her listening.

Listening has also been considered from a further perspective in recent years when it is examined in relation not only to comprehension, but also to language learning. Since listening can provide much of the input and data learners receive in language learning, an important question is, how can attention to the language the listener hears facilitate second language learning? This raises the issue of the role "noticing" and conscious awareness of language form, and how noticing can be part of the process by which learners can incorporate new words forms, and structures into their developing communicative competence. This role for listening will also be examined in this paper. We will consider listening from two different perspectives, which we will call *listening as comprehension*, and *listening as acquisition*.

## LISTENING AS COMPREHENSION

Listening as comprehension is the traditional way of thinking about the nature of listening. Indeed, in most methodology manuals *listening*, and *listening comprehension* are synonymous. This view of listening is based on the assumption that the main function of listening in second language learning is to facilitate understanding of spoken discourse. We will examine this view of listening in some detail before considering a complementary view of listening—listening as acquisition. This latter view of listening considers how listening can provide input which triggers the further development of second language proficiency.

### Characteristics of spoken discourse

In order to understand the nature of listening processes, we need to consider some of the characteristics of spoken discourse and the special problems it poses for listeners. Spoken discourse has very different characteristics from written discourse and these differences can add a number of dimensions to our understanding of how we process speech. For example spoken discourse is usually instantaneous. The listener must process it “on-line” and there is often no chance to listen to it again. Spoken discourse also often strikes the second language listener as being very fast, although speech rates vary considerably. Radio monologs may contain 160 words per minute, while conversation can consist of up to 220 words per minute. The impression of faster or slower speech generally results from the amount of intra clausal pausing that speakers make use of. Unlike written discourse, spoken discourse is usually unplanned and often reflects the processes of construction such as hesitations, reduced forms, fillers, and repeats. Spoken discourse has also been described as having a linear structure, compared to a hierarchical structure for written discourse. Whereas the unit of organization of written discourse is the sentence, spoken language is usually delivered one clause at a time and longer utterances in conversation generally consist of

several co-ordinated clauses. Most of the clauses used are simple conjuncts or adjuncts. Spoken texts too are often context dependent and personal, often assuming shared background knowledge. Lastly, spoken texts may be spoken with many different accents, from standard to non-standard, to regional, non-native, and so on.

### Understanding spoken discourse: bottom-up and top-down processing

Two different kinds of processes are involved in understanding spoken discourse. These are often referred to as bottom-up and top-down processing. Bottom-up processing refers to using the incoming input as the basis for understanding the message. Comprehension begins with the data that has been received which is analysed as successive levels of organization—sounds, words, clauses, sentences, texts—until meaning is arrived at. Comprehension is viewed as a process of decoding.

The listener’s lexical and grammatical competence in a language provides the basis for bottom-up processing. The input is scanned for familiar words, and grammatical knowledge is used to work out the relationship between elements of sentences. Clark and Clark (1977:49) summarize this view of listening in the following way:

- 1 They [listeners] take in raw speech and hold a phonological representation of it in working memory.
- 2 They immediately attempt to organize the phonological representation into constituents, identifying their content and function.
- 3 They identify each constituent and then construct underlying propositions, building continually onto a hierarchical representation of propositions.
- 4 Once they have identified the propositions for a constituent, they retain them in working memory and at some point purge memory of the phonological representation. In doing this, they forget the exact wording and retain the meaning.

We can illustrate this with an example. Imagine I said the following to you:

“The guy I sat next to on the bus this morning on the way to work was telling me he runs a Thai restaurant in Chinatown. Apparently it’s very popular at the moment.”

In order to understand this utterance using bottom-up processing, we have to mentally break the utterance down into its components. This is referred to as “chunking” and here are the chunks that guide us to the underlying core meaning of the utterances.

the guy  
I sat next to on the bus  
this morning  
was telling me  
he runs a Thai restaurant in Chinatown  
apparently it’s very popular  
at the moment

The chunks help us identify the underlying propositions the utterances express, namely;

I was on the bus.  
There was a guy next to me.  
We talked.  
He said he runs a Thai restaurant.  
It’s in Chinatown.  
It’s very popular now.

It is these units of meaning which we remember, and not the form in which we initially heard them. Our knowledge of grammar helps us find the appropriate chunks, and the speaker also assists us in this process through intonation and pausing.

### Teaching bottom-up processing

Learners need a large vocabulary and a good working knowledge of sentence structure to be able to process texts bottom-up. Exercises that develop bottom-up processing help the learner to do such things as the following:

- Retain input while it is being processed
- Recognize word and clause divisions
- Recognize key words
- Recognize key transitions in a discourse
- Recognize grammatical relations between key elements in sentences
- Use stress and intonation to identify word and sentence functions

Many traditional classroom listening activities

focus primarily on bottom-up processing, exercises such as dictation, cloze listening, the use of multiple choice questions after a text and similar activities which require close and detailed recognition and processing of the input and which assume that everything the listener needs to understand is contained in the input.

In classroom materials, examples of the kinds of tasks that develop these bottom-up listening skills are those that require listeners to do the following kinds of things:

- Identifying the referents of pronouns in an utterance
- Recognize the time reference of an utterance
- Distinguish between positive and negative statements
- Recognize the order in words occurred in an utterance
- Identify sequence markers
- Identify key words that occurred in a spoken text
- Identify which modal verbs occurred in a spoken text

Here are some examples of listening tasks that develop bottom-up processing:

a) Students listen to positive and negative statements and choose an appropriate form of agreement.

<i>Students hear</i>	<i>Students choose the correct response</i>	
That’s a nice camera.	Yes	No
That’s not a very good one.	Yes	No
This coffee isn’t hot.	Yes	No
This meal is really tasty.	Yes	No

b) The following exercise practices listening for word stress as a marker of the information focus of a sentence. Students listen to questions that have two possible information focuses and use stress to identify the appropriate focus. (Words in italic are stressed).

<i>Students hear</i>	<i>Students check information focus</i>	
The bank’s <i>downtown</i> branch is closed today.	Where	When
Is the city office open on <i>Sunday</i> ?	Where	When
I’m going to the <i>museum</i> today.	Where	When

c) The following activity helps students develop the ability to identify key words.

Students hear:

My hometown is a nice place to visit because it is close to a beach and there are lots of interesting walks you can do in the surrounding countryside.

Students' task:

Which of these words do you hear? Number them in the order you hear them.

beach shops walks hometown countryside schools nice

Top-down processing, on the other hand, refers to the use of background knowledge in understanding the meaning of a message. Whereas bottom-up processing goes from language to meaning, top-down processing goes from meaning to language. Background knowledge may take several forms. It may be previous knowledge about the topic of discourse, it may be situational or contextual knowledge, or it may be knowledge in the form of "schemata" or "scripts"—plans about the overall structure of events and the relationships between them.

For example consider how we respond to the following utterance:

"I heard on the news there was a big earthquake in China last night."

On recognizing the word "earthquake" we generate a set of questions we want to hear or obtain responses to:

- Where exactly was the earthquake?
- How big was it?
- Did it cause a lot of damage?
- Were many people killed or injured?
- What rescue efforts are under way?

These questions guide us through the understanding of any subsequent discourse that we hear and they focus our listening on what is said about the questions.

Or consider this example. Imagine I say the following to a colleague at my office one morning :

"I am going to the dentist this afternoon."

This utterance activates a schema for "going to the dentist". This schema can be thought of as organized around the following dimensions:

- A setting: (e.g. the dentist's surgery)
- Participants: (e.g. the dentist, the patient, the dentist's assistant)
- Goals: (e.g. to have a check up or to replace a filling)

- Procedures: (e.g. injections, drilling, rinsing)
- Outcomes: (e.g. fixing the problem, pain, discomfort)

When I return to my office the following exchange takes places between my colleague and I:  
"So how was it?"

"Fine. I didn't feel a thing".

Because speaker and hearer share understanding of the "going to the dentist" schema the details of the visit need not be spelled out. A minimum amount of information is given to enable the participants to understand what happened. This is another example of the use of top-down processing.

Much of our knowledge of the world consists of knowledge about specific situations, the people one might expect to encounter in such situations, what their goals and purposes are, and how they typically accomplish them. Likewise we have knowledge of thousands of topics and concepts and their associated meanings, and links to other topics and concepts. In applying this prior knowledge about things, concepts, people and events to a particular utterance about a specific topic, comprehension can often proceed from the top down. The actual discourse heard is used to confirm expectations and to fill out details.

Consider the meaning of the expression "Good luck!" and how it's meaning would differ if said as a response to the following statements:

- a) I'm going to the casino.
- b) I'm going to the dentist.
- c) I'm going to a job interview.

The meaning of "good luck" differs according to the situation we mentally refer it to, according to the background knowledge we bring to each situation when it is used.

If the listener is unable to make use of top-down processing, an utterance or discourse may be incomprehensible. Bottom-up processing alone often provides an insufficient basis for comprehension. Consider the following narrative, for example, and read it carefully one or two times. What is the topic?

*Sally first tried setting loose a team of gophers. The plan backfired when a dog chased them away. She then entertained a group of teenagers and was delighted when they brought their motorcycles. Unfortunately, she failed to*

find a Peeping Tom listed in the Yellow Pages. Furthermore, her stereo system was not loud enough. The crab grass might have worked but she didn't have a fan that was sufficiently powerful. The obscene phone calls gave her hope until the number was changed. She thought about calling a door to door salesman but decided to hang up a clothesline instead. It was the installation of blinking neon lights across the street that did the trick. She eventually framed the ad from the classified section.

Stein and Albridge (1978)

At first the narrative is virtually incomprehensible. However once a schema is provided to apply to the narrative—"Getting rid of a troublesome neighbor"—the reader can make use of top-down processing and the elements of the story begin to fit in place as the writer describes a series of actions she took to try to annoy her neighbor and cause him to leave.

### Teaching top-down processing

Exercises that require top-down processing develop the learner's ability to do the following:

- Use key words to construct the schema of a discourse
- Infer the setting for a text
- Infer the role of the participants and their goals
- Infer causes or effects
- Infer unstated details of a situation
- Anticipate questions related to the topic or situation

The following activities develop top-down listening skills.

- Students generate a set of questions they expect to hear about a topic and listen to see if they are answered.
- Students generate a list of things they already know about a topic and things they would like to learn more about. Then listen and compare.
- Students read one speaker's part in a conversation, predict the other speaker's part, then listen and compare.
- Students read a list of key points to be covered in a talk, then listen to see which ones were mentioned.
- Students listen to part of a story, complete the rest of it, then listen and compare endings.
- Students read news headlines, guess what happened, then listen to the news items and compare.

### Combining bottom-up and top-down listening in a listening lesson

In real world listening, both bottom-up and top-down processing generally occur together, the extent to which one or the other dominates depending on the listener's familiarity with the topic and content of a text, the density of information in a text, the text type, and the listener's purpose in listening. An experienced cook, for example, might listen to a radio chef describing a recipe for cooking chicken and listen to compare the chef's recipe with her own. She has a precise schema to apply to the task and listens to register similarities and differences. She makes more use of top-down processing. A novice cook listening to the same program however, might listen with much greater attention trying to identify each step in order to write down the recipe. Here, far more bottom-up processing is needed.

A typical lesson sequence in current teaching materials involves a three part lesson sequence consisting of pre-listening, listening and post-listening, and contains activities which link bottom-up and top-down listening (Field, 1998). The pre-listening phase prepares the students for both top-down and bottom-up processing through activities involving activating prior knowledge, making predictions, and reviewing key vocabulary. The while-listening phase focuses on comprehension through exercises which require selective listening, gist listening, sequencing, etc. The post listening phase typically involves a response to comprehension and may require students to give opinions about a topic. However it can also include a bottom-up focus if the teacher and the listeners examine the texts or parts of the text in detail, focussing on sections that students could not follow. This may involve a micro-analysis of sections of the text to enable students to recognize such features as blends, reduced words, ellipsis, etc and other features of spoken discourse that they were unable to process or recognize.

## LISTENING STRATEGIES

Successful listening can also be looked at in terms of the strategies the listener makes use of when listening. Does the learner focus mainly on the content of a text, or does he or she also consider how to listen? A focus on how to listen raises the issues of listening strategies. Strategies can be thought of as the ways in which a learner approaches and manages a task, and listeners can be taught effective ways of approaching and managing their listening. These activities seek to involve listeners actively in the process of listening.

Buck (2001,104) identifies two kinds of strategies in listening:

**Cognitive strategies:** those mental activities related to comprehending and storing input in working memory or long-term memory for later retrieval;

- *Comprehension processes:* associated with the processing of linguistic and non-linguistic input;
- *Storing and memory processes:* associated with the storing of linguistic and non-linguistic input in working memory or long-term memory;
- *Using and retrieval processes:* associated with accessing memory, to be readied for output.

**Metacognitive strategies:** those conscious or unconscious mental activities that perform an executive function in the management of cognitive strategies;

- *Assessing the situation:* taking stock of conditions surrounding a language task by assessing one's own knowledge, one's available internal and external resources and the constraints of the situation before engaging in a task;
- *Monitoring:* determining the effectiveness of one's own or another's performance while engaged in a task;
- *Self-evaluating:* determining the effectiveness of one's own or another's performance after engaging in the activity;
- *Self-testing:* testing oneself to determine the effectiveness of one's own language use or the lack thereof.

Goh (1997,1998) shows how the metacognitive activities of planning, monitoring and evaluating can be applied to the teaching of listening.

### Metacognitive strategies for self-regulation in learner listening

<b>Planning</b>	This is a strategy for determining learning objectives and deciding the means by which the objectives can be achieved.
<i>General listening development</i>	Identify learning objectives for listening development Determine ways to achieve these objectives Set realistic short-term and long-term goals Seek opportunities for listening practice Specific listening task
<i>Specific listening task</i>	Preview main ideas before listening Rehearse language (e.g. pronunciation) necessary for the task Decide in advance which aspects of the text to concentrate on
<b>Monitoring</b>	This is a strategy for checking on the progress in the course of learning or carrying out a learning task.
<i>General listening development</i>	Consider progress against a set of pre-determined criteria Determine how close it is to achieving short-term or long-term goals Check and see if the same mistakes are still being made
<i>Identify the source of difficulty</i>	Specific listening task Check understanding during listening Check the appropriateness and the accuracy of what is understood and compare it with new information
<b>Evaluating</b>	This is a strategy for determining the success of the outcome of an attempt to learn or complete a learning task.
<i>General listening development</i>	Assess listening progress against a set of pre-determined criteria Assess the effectiveness of learning and practice strategies Assess the appropriateness of learning goals and objectives set
<i>Specific listening task</i>	Check the appropriateness and the accuracy of what has been understood Determine the effectiveness of strategies used the task Assess overall comprehension of the text

Goh and Yusnita (2006) describe the effectiveness of strategy instruction among a group of 11 and 12 year old ESL learners in Singapore.

Eight listening lessons which combined guided reflection and teacher-led process-based discussions were conducted. At the end of the period of metacognitive instruction, the children reported in their written diaries a deeper understanding of the nature and the

demands of listening, increased confidence in completing listening tasks, and better strategic knowledge for coping with comprehension difficulties. There was also an increase in the scores in the listening examinations of the majority of the students, particularly the weaker listeners, suggesting that metacognitive instruction also had a direct impact on listening performance.

Another approach to the incorporating listening strategies in a listening lesson involves a cycle of activities, as seen below.

**Steps in guided metacognitive sequence in a listening lesson from Goh 2006**

STEP	ACTIVITY
Step 1	<p><b>Pre-listening activity</b></p> <p>In pairs, students predict the possible words and phrases that they might hear. They write down their predictions. They may write some words in their first language.</p>
Step 2	<p><b>First listen</b></p> <p>As they are listening to the text, students underline or circle those words or phrases (including first language equivalents) that they have predicted correctly. They also write down new information they hear.</p>
Step 3	<p><b>Pair process-based discussion</b></p> <p>In pairs, students compare what they have understood so far and explain how they arrive at the understanding. They identify the parts that cause confusion and disagreement and make a note of the parts of the text that require special attention in the second listen.</p>
Step 4	<p><b>Second listen</b></p> <p>Students listen to those parts that have caused confusion or disagreement areas and make notes of any new information they hear.</p>
Step 5	<p><b>Whole-class process-based discussion</b></p> <p>The teacher leads a discussion to confirm comprehension before discussing with students the strategies that they reported using.</p>

## LISTENING AS ACQUISITION

Our discussion so far has dealt with one perspective on listening, namely listening as comprehension. Everything we have discussed has been based on the assumption that the role of listening in a language program is to help develop learners' abilities to understand things they listen to.

This approach to teaching of listening has been based on the following assumptions:

- Listening serves the goal of extracting meaning from messages.
- In order to do this learners have to be taught how to use both bottom-up and top-down processes in arriving at an understanding of messages.
- The language of utterances, i.e. the precise words, syntax, expressions used by speakers are temporary carriers of meaning. Once meaning has been identified there is no further need to attend to the form of messages unless problems in understanding occurred.
- Teaching listening strategies can help make learners more effective listeners.

Tasks employed in classroom materials seek to enable listeners to recognize and act on the general, specific or implied meaning of utterances, and these include sequencing tasks, true-false comprehension tasks, picture identification tasks, summary tasks, dicto comp as well as activities designed to develop effective listening strategies. Although what is sometimes called "discriminative listening" (Wolvin and Coakely 1996) is sometimes employed (i.e. listening to distinguish auditory stimuli), it is generally taught as an initial stage in the listening process, the ultimate goal of which is comprehension. Activities that are typically not employed when comprehension is the focus of listening are those which require accurate recognition and recall of words, syntax and expressions that occurred in the input. Such activities would include dictation, cloze exercises and identifying differences between a spoken and written text. Activities such as these are discouraged because they focus on listening for words rather than listening for meaning, i.e. they give too much emphasis to bottom-up listening processes rather than top down ones.

Few would question the approach to the teaching of listening described above when the focus is listening as comprehension. But another crucial role has been proposed for listening in a language program, namely its role in facilitating second language acquisition. Schmidt (1990) has drawn attention to the role of consciousness in language learning, and in particular to the role of *noticing* in learning. His argument is that we won't learn anything from input we hear and understand unless we notice something about the input. Consciousness of features of the input can serve as a trigger which activates the first stage in the process of incorporating new linguistic features into one's language competence. As Slobin (1985:1164) remarked of L1 learning:

The only linguistic materials that can figure in language-making are stretches of speech that attract the child's attention to a sufficient degree to be noticed and held in memory.

Schmidt (1990,139) further clarifies this point in distinguishing between input (what the learner hears) and intake (that part of the input that the learner notices). Only intake can serve as the basis for language development. In his own study of his acquisition of Portuguese (Schmidt and Frota 1986), Schmidt found that there was a close connection between noticing features of the input, and their later emergence in his own speech.

In order for language development to take place, however, more appears to be required than simply noticing features of the input. The learner has to try to incorporate new linguistic items into his or her language repertoire. That is, they need to be used in oral production. This involves processes that have been variously referred to as restructuring, complexification and producing stretched output. Van Patten (1993, 436) suggests that restructuring refers to

... those [processes] that mediate the incorporation of intake into the developing system. Since the internalization of intake is not mere accumulation of discrete bits of data, data have to "fit in" in some way and sometimes the accommodation of a particular set of data causes changes in the rest of the system.

Complexification and stretching of output occurs in contexts

... where the learner needs to produce output which the current interlanguage system cannot handle ...[and so] ... pushes the limits of the interlanguage system to handle that output. Tarone and Liu (1995, 120-121)

In other words, learners need to take part in activities which require them to try out and experiment in using newly noticed language forms in order for new learning items to become incorporated into their linguistic repertoire.

What are the implications of this view of the role of listening in language learning, to the teaching of listening? I would suggest that we can firstly distinguish between situations where comprehension only is an appropriate instructional goal and those where comprehension plus acquisition is a relevant focus. Examples of the former would be situations where listening to extract information is the primary focus of listening, such as listening to lectures, listening to announcements, listening to sales presentations, etc, and situations where listening serves primarily a transactional function, such as service encounters. In other cases, however, a listening course may be part of a general English course or linked to a speaking course, and in these situations both listening as comprehension and listening as acquisition should be the focus. Listening texts and materials can then be exploited, first as the basis for comprehension, and second as the basis for acquisition. What classroom strategies are appropriate in this case?

I would propose a two-part cycle of teaching activities as the basis for the listening as acquisition phase of a lesson, namely:

- a) noticing activities
- b) restructuring activities

Noticing activities involve returning to the listening texts that served as the basis for comprehension activities and using them as the basis for language awareness. For example, students can listen again to a recording in order to:

- identify differences between what they hear and a printed version of the text

- complete a cloze version of the text
- complete sentence-stems taken from the text
- check off from a list expressions that occurred in the text

Restructuring activities are oral or written tasks that involve productive use of selected items from the listening text. Such activities could include:

- in the case of conversational texts, pair reading of the tape scripts
- written sentence-completion tasks requiring use of expressions and other linguistic items that occurred in the texts
- dialog practice based on dialogs that incorporate items from the text
- role plays in which students are required to use key language from the texts

For example here is the listening text from an activity in a course book:

Mike has just returned from Brazil. Listen to him talk about Carnaval. What did he enjoy most about it?

Mike: Isn't that music fantastic? It's from a samba CD that I got when I was in Rio for Carnival. Wow! Carnaval in Rio is really something! It's a party that lasts for four whole days. It's held late in February or early March, but you need to book a hotel room way in advance because hotels fill up really quickly. Carnaval is celebrated all over Brazil, but the most famous party is in Rio. The whole city is decorated with colored lights and streamers. It's really very beautiful. Everyone is very friendly - especially to visitors from other countries. The best part about Carnaval is the big parade. The costumes are unbelievable - people work on them for months. It's really fantastic to watch. Everyone dances the samba in the streets. I'd really recommend you go to Rio for Carnaval if you ever have the chance.

The listening activities that accompany this text focus on listening for comprehension and focus on understanding details from the passage. However the text could also be used as the basis for a follow-up acquisition activity. For example, students could be given the text above with some key lexical and grammatical items

deleted and the passage used as a cloze listening. Then the students could be asked to work in pairs and rewrite the monolog as a question and answer exchange between Mike and a friend. Once this was done the dialog could be used for pair practice. In this way students would have the chance to acquire for active use, some of the vocabulary and grammar used in the text.

I am hence advocating that in contexts where comprehension and acquisition are the goals of a listening course, a two part strategy is appropriate in classroom teaching and instructional materials, namely:

### **Phase 1: listening as comprehension**

Use of the materials as discussed above

### **Phase 2: listening as acquisition**

The listening texts used are now used as the basis for speaking activities, making use of noticing activities and restructuring activities.

In *Tune In* both listening as comprehension and listening as acquisition are the focus. The noticing activities in the course focus on features of what we normally mean by "conversation", that is, interaction which serves a primarily social function. When people meet, they exchange greetings, engage in small talk and chit chat, recount recent experiences and so on, because they wish to be friendly and to establish a comfortable zone of interaction with others. The focus is more on the speakers and how they wish to present themselves to each other than on the message. Such exchanges may be either casual or more formal depending on the circumstances and their nature has been well described by Brown and Yule (1983). The main features of this kind of conversational interaction can be summarized as follows:

- Has a primarily social function
- Reflects role relationships
- Reflects speaker's identity
- May be formal or casual
- Uses conversational conventions
- Reflects degrees of politeness
- Employs many generic words
- Uses conversational register
- Is jointly constructed

Examples of these kinds of talk are:

- Chatting to an adjacent passenger during a plane flight (polite conversation that does not seek to develop the basis for future social contact)
- Chatting to a school friend over coffee (casual conversation that serves to mark an ongoing friendship)
- A student chatting to his or her professor while waiting for an elevator (polite conversation that reflects unequal power between the two participants)
- Telling a friend about an amusing weekend experience, and hearing him or her recount a similar experience he or she once had (sharing personal recounts)

Some of the skills involved in using talk as interaction involve knowing how to do the following things:

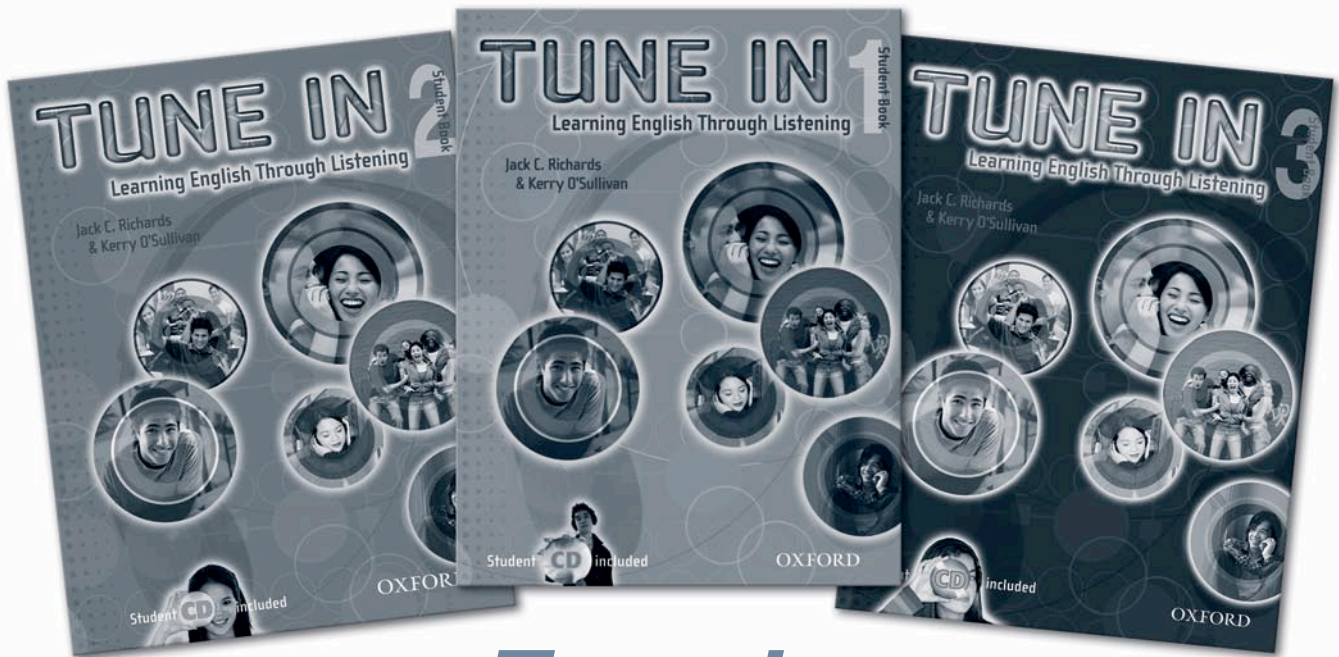
- Opening and closing conversations
- Choosing topics
- Making small-talk
- Joking
- Recounting personal incidents and experiences
- Turn-taking
- Using adjacency-pairs
- Interrupting
- Reacting to others
- Using an appropriate style of speaking

In *Tune In* these and other aspects of spoken discourse serve as the focus for noticing activities. After students have completed comprehension-based exercises, some of the features of spoken English that occurred in the listening input are selected for noticing activities. Then students practice using the same conversational features in a guided speaking activity at the end of each unit.

By linking listening tasks to speaking tasks in the way described above, opportunities can be provided for students to notice how language is used in different communicative contexts, and then practice using some of the language that occurred in the listening texts.

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