FACTORS THAT PROMOTE EFFECTIVE LISTENING

A MAJOR PROJECT
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF LETTERS
AND THE INSTITUTE OF ECONOMICS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES
OF BILKENT UNIVERSITY
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTERS OF ARTS IN
THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

BY

Nilgün SENCAN
August, 1989

BILKENT UNIVERSITY

INSTITUTE OF ECONOMICS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

MA MAJOR PROJECT EXAMINATION RESULT FORM

August 31, 1989

The examining committee appointed by the
Institute of Economics and Social Sciences for the
major project examination of the MA TEFL student

Nilgun SENCAN

has read the project of the student.
The committee has decided that the project
of the student is satisfactory/unsatisfactory.

Project Title: FACTORS THAT PROMOTE EFFECTIVE LISTENING

Project Advisor: Dr. John R. Aydelott
                 Bilkent University, MA TEFL Program

Committee Member: Dr. James G. Ward
                  English Teaching Officer, USIS

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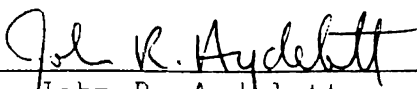FACTORS THAT PROMOTE EFFECTIVE LISTENING

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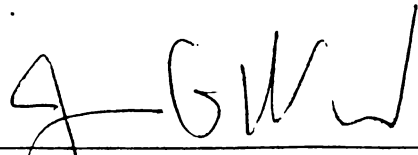THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

BY

Nilgun SENCAN

August, 1989

I certify that I have read this major project and that in my opinion it is fully adequate, in scope and in quality, as a major project for the degree of Masters of Arts.

_____
John R. Aydelott
(Advisor)

I certify that I have read this major project and that in my opinion it is fully adequate, in scope and in quality, as a major project for the degree of Masters of Arts.

_____
James G. Ward
(Committee Member)

Approved for the
Institute of Economics and Social Sciences

Bülent R. Bozkurt
Dean, Faculty of Letters

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INTRODUCTION

The skill of listening comprehension had been neglected until the last few years because some linguists thought that if students learnt to speak a second language, they would learn to understand it well; moreover, this skill was regarded as a passive skill. In addition, ignorance about the nature of the process of listening comprehension causes this neglect. Most teachers do not know the theoretical side of listening comprehension and they are not able to teach students how to listen to the spoken language. Besides there are two more reasons for this neglect:

1) Most text books do not emphasize teaching listening comprehension and

2) The few effective materials in existence do not meet the needs for listening activities.

However, we realize today that learning to understand a second language is not the same as learning to speak it. Nowadays the greatest emphasis for effective teaching is on direct communication in the foreign language classroom; thus the skill of listening has recently been given a lot of importance. Today the members of different societies have contact with each other through speaking and listening and this is realized through the help of media. It is now certain that there is a need for systematic instruction in listening.

In Turkey where English is taught as a foreign language, the ability to understand the spoken language is not acquired, because acquisition comes out in natural learning situations.

On the other hand, learning is the result of the conscious study of a second language. Since English is not used for the Turkish society's immediate needs, it has a foreign language status in Turkey. As a result, the great majority learns English as a foreign language. This skill has to be taught systematically to the students in Turkey.

Systematic teaching of listening comprehension in Turkey is neglected for several reasons. First, most classes are too crowded; second the teachers of English are never trained in listening, and a good definition of listening comprehension has never been given to the teachers who teach English.

PURPOSE

My purpose for selecting this topic is to clarify the importance of listening comprehension and suggest to EFL class teachers effective ways of teaching this skill. Foreign language needs in present day society are far different from the needs of the society in the past. Since the needs have changed, teaching and testing a foreign language skill must reflect these changes. Therefore, some effective and reliable listening tests suitable for Turkish classroom settings are suggested here in order to improve training in listening.

This topic is important to the field of EFL in Turkey. Most students suffer from the inability to understand native English speech at normal speed. English is not a dominant language here and they are not likely to be exposed to native

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English speech. It is probable that students can be confronted with telephone messages, formal lectures, informal speech, and television or radio programs. Therefore, they should be taught these various spoken forms and listening tasks should be presented from simple to more complex in the general process of learning English. Consequently, both teachers and students will benefit from this project. Better teaching will result in better learning.

METHOD

In order to get information about this research topic, selected materials from the AM TEFL library, Turkish American Association, and Turkish British Association libraries and also the libraries of the other universities in Ankara have been reviewed.

In this project, a practical section on techniques for improving the teaching of listening is provided and these techniques are based on the ideas of some authors who believe in the importance of teaching listening comprehension.

LIMITATIONS

One of the limitations for this study is that this research is limited to teaching English as a foreign/second language especially to Turkish students. For this reason conclusions for teaching other foreign languages and to other learners cannot be drawn with much accuracy.

Another limitation is that this study deals only with the skill of listening, especially the explanation of factors that

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promote effective listening in Turkey. The advice and practical
suggestions offered are intended to improve the teaching of
listening, not other language skills.

I. LISTENING AS AN IMPORTANT SKILL

In the last few years the skill of listening has been
considered as an important language skill. Most foreign
language learners do not have the chance to acquire the
listening comprehension ability to understand the spoken
form of foreign language as they only listen to their
teachers and classmates.

Turkish students learning English are in a similar
situation as well because the foreign language they have
been learning does not represent an immediate need for them
out of class. Because of this fact, if the foreign language
is not naturally acquired, the ability to comprehend the
spoken language at normal speed in unstructured situations
must be taught. Learning this ability is different from
acquiring it in the first language.

In the mother tongue, learners get the message
unconsciously; whereas, in the foreign language, they should
be taught to predict the meaning of some words that construct
the message from the context because these words may prevent
them from getting the message. Students also need practice in
learning to comprehend native English speech at a fast rate
which occurs in exciting conversations. Since even native
speakers may fail to get the meaning of all the words in a
message in some situations, it is better to teach students to

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concentrate on the general content. Teachers should have students become aware of this specific point in order not to cause students to develop inferiority complexes and the feeling of insecurity.

Growth in vocabulary and structure of the foreign language cause growth in the ability to understand the spoken foreign language. Thus more practice should be provided through the help of increasingly difficult material.

Listening to spoken native language regularly in conversational situations helps learners tune their ears to the rhythm and sounds of the foreign language. Providing sufficient practice in this area helps students learn to distinguish important and redundant features of the language.

In classes, students are taught how to read, how to guess the meaning of unknown words from the context and familiar words in reading; however, it is usually considered that learners can naturally, automatically understand the spoken form of the language. Whereas it should be known that students need more help and guidelines in this skill and this can be realized by doing similar exercises that will promote listening comprehension.

According to Byrne (1981) reading and listening are regarded as receptive skills. If these skills are given more importance in language teaching, students learn better and they also get the opportunity to learn what has not been taught. Extensive reading and listening help the learner process rapidly in language learning. Although production is

important, comprehension comes before it. This fact should be recognized in language teaching.

1. THE ACT OF COMMUNICATION

According to Crystal (1987), speech communication is realized by at least two interlocutors. During communication, both speakers and hearers carry out three stages. Speakers follow the stages presented below:

_ Semantic encoding

_ Syntactical encoding

_ Phonological encoding

Listeners perform just opposite tasks:

_ Phonological decoding

_ Syntactical decoding

_ Semantic decoding

First an idea comes to the speaker's mind. The idea is completed but it has not been put into words yet. At the second stage, the idea is put into words. That is, "syntactical encoding" takes the place of "semantic encoding." Then the speaker utters a sentence at the "phonological encoding" stage. On the other hand, phonological decoding is realized by the hearer at the first step. The sound reaches the ears of the listener and the sounds of the utterance are decoded in the mind. Then the sounds are put into a string of words in the listener's language. Eventually the listener gets the meaning of the utterance, "semantic decoding." As the human mind works very fast, meaning is put into words and

sounds are turned into meaning extremely quickly.

This information clarifies that it is important for listeners to recognize sounds in some order. Unless they are successful at this stage, the other two stages can never be achieved by them (Crystal, 1987).

2. THE LISTENING COMPREHENSION PROCESS

There are a few models that explain the listening process. One of them is McKeating's model. McKeating (1981) outlines his model of the listening process in seven stages. In the process of listening comprehension, listeners carry out the following stages:

stage 1: Listeners recognize and distinguish the differences among sounds or letter and word shapes.

stage 2 : They initially recognize short stretches of meaningful material.

stage 3 : These materials are put into short-term memory.

stage 4 and 5 : After putting the materials into short-term memory, listeners relate them to what has gone before and/or what follows.

stage 6 : At this stage, this information is put into long-term memory.

stage 7 : After extracting the meaning from the message and putting it into long-term memory, but the gist of the message is recalled later.

According to Mckeating at stages 2, 3, 4 and 5, listeners both recognize the lexical meaning as well as perceive the structure of the language. Listeners follow these seven stages extremely rapidly; especially the processing time in short-term memory is much shorter.

3. LEARNING STAGES IN LISTENING COMPREHENSION

According to Fries (Herschenhorn, 1989), "production" and "recognition" are two levels in the mastery of a language that learners should reach. He says they must be considered as two separate levels in the initial stages of learning and teaching. He adds that in the actual practice session, these two levels cannot be separated: e.g., in his methodology and materials, speaking is taught through listening.

Learners carry out several stages while comprehending the spoken form of a language. At first the foreign language utterances do not mean anything to learners. After getting accustomed to listening to the utterances regularly, they begin to recognize some sound orders. Regular falls and rises in the tone of the voice and in the breath groups help them recognize the order in the group of noise. Then they learn vocabulary, verb groups, and simple expressions and begin to distinguish the acoustic and syntactic rules. At the third stage, students are able to recognize elements in the speech but they are still unable to catch the relationships within the string of sound; thus they cannot comprehend the whole message.

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Through the help of much practice, learners reach the next level. Listening to more speech in the foreign language results in the ability to recognize the crucial elements that construct the message. At more advanced stages, they eventually recognize the components of the message but they still have difficulty in remembering what has been recognized. These all happen in the "recognition" level as Fries (cited in Herschenhorn, 1989) points out.

Rivers (1980) states that listeners are able to concentrate all their attention on the higher information items with which learners are unfamiliar because low information items related to listeners' previous knowledge can be anticipated by giving little attention at the next stage. Rivers (cited in Herschenhorn, 1989) also claims that there are two basic levels in learning to listen: "recognition" and "selection". Explanations of these two basic levels of learning to listen follow:

1. The first level includes the recognition of phonological, syntactic, and semantic codes of the language automatically.

2. At the "selection" level, learners are able to comprehend the message unconsciously (Herschenhorn, 1989).

It is desirable to begin to train students thoroughly at the recognition level for future success. Training at this level prepares students to listen to the foreign language speech comprehensively in normal situations (Byrne, 1981).

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REDUNDANCY AND NOISE

"Redundancy" occurs when listeners lose some parts of a message as a result of many things, such as noise and unattentiveness. "Redundant" utterances may take the form of repetitions, false starts, re-phrasings, self-corrections, elaborations, and apparently meaningless additions such as "I mean" or "you Know" (Ur, 1984).

Ur (1984) states that speakers and listeners benefit from redundancy. Speakers are given the chance to work out and express the message that they really want to communicate; on the other hand, listeners get the chance of following the speech through the help of extra information and given time to comprehend the message. Redundancy is found in elements of sound and morphological and syntactical formations which come together in order to construct messages in each language. Redundancy helps listeners put the pieces of information they hear together in order to comprehend the message. Even native speakers of a language are sometimes prevented from hearing everything in the language clearly or they may not pay attention to every component of each utterance. Here, redundancy comes into play and helps the listener. Artificially constructed messages frequently used in foreign language classes reduce the quantity of redundancy used by a speaker in a normal language setting. This makes comprehending the message more difficult. Therefore, in teaching a foreign language, redundancy should be taken into consideration (Rivers, 1980).

"Noise", on the other hand, occurs when the message is not decoded by listeners because of interference. It is just the opposite of redundancy.

Noise may result not only because of outside interference but also because of the lack of attention of the listener. In some occasions, listeners may not get the message because the speaker may mispronounce or misuse a phrase or a word or the listener may not know it at all. Although redundancy helps second-language learners, noise prevents them from coping with it (Ur, 1984).

II. TEACHING LISTENING COMPREHENSION

According to Richards (1985) there are three dimensions in teaching listening comprehension: "approach," "design," and "procedure." In the level of "approach," the processes involved in listening are clarified. "Design" represents the level that this information is put into a form in which objectives can be clarified and learning tasks are designed. This phase consists of needs assessment, listening skills, diagnostic testing and formulation of instructional objectives. These procedures are necessary before selecting and developing instructional activities. At the "procedure" level, questions related to exercise types and teaching techniques are examined.

Paulston and Bruder (1976) provide the following list of general principles for teaching listening comprehension based on Morley's (1976) guidelines:

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1. Definite goals must be stated for listening comprehension lessons taking overall curriculum, teachers and students into account.

2. Listening comprehension lessons should be planned extremely carefully.

3. Active overt student participation should be provided in listening comprehension lesson.

4. A communicative urgency for remembering should be provided in order to develop concentration.

5. "Conscious memory work" should be emphasized in comprehension lessons. According to Morley (cited in Paulston and Bruder, 1976) "listening" is receiving, receiving requires thinking and thinking requires memory. Listening, thinking and remembering cannot be separated.

6. In listening comprehension, students should not be tested but taught. Students' answers should be checked only for the sake of feedback.

1) PROBLEMS IN LISTENING COMPREHENSION

Chastain (1976) points out that students fail in developing listening skills and he explains two reasons for this problem:

1. They do not give necessary attention to listening in the classroom.

2. Their listening habits are poor.

In his book Chastain gives a list of guidelines for the teacher in order to increase attentiveness in the classroom:

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- stress the importance of careful and constant listening,

- encourage students to continue listening even if they
  do not understand everything,

- call on students randomly,

- give importance to participation in the class,

- create an enjoyable atmosphere,

- select materials according to students' interests,

- use various kinds of activities,

- give importance to students' ideas and input,

- select materials related to listening and their level,

- do not permit students not to listen.

According to Brindley (cited in Richards, 1985) there
are seven problems that learners are confronted with in
listening activities:

1. dealing with subjects other than immediate priorities,

2. comprehending long utterances, especially the ones
   which consist of clauses,

3. understanding idioms,

4. understanding open-ended questions,

5. making use of grammatical clues to extract meaning,

6. identifying the topic of a conversation between native
   speakers,

7. misunderstanding homonyms.

Kalivoda (1980) claims that there are three major areas
related to the problems in listening comprehension: memory,
rapid speech, and vocabulary. She explains the reasons and
solutions for each problem area:

MEMORY

- learners do not make use of redundancy,

- they lack the time to mentally process the information.

In order to overcome these hurdles, she suggests the following solutions:

- students should be taught how to chunk (in other words, teachers should take the schema theory into consideration). However there is evidence that operations of this kind are more difficult in a second language than in a foreign language.

- teachers should provide practice in active processing in order to make students improve their skills in processing messages they hear in real language settings; that is, they will learn what they practice.

According to Miller (cited in Kalivoda, 1980), information is traditionally translated into a verbal code in order to mentally process it; that is, speakers rephrase the information in their own words, and then remember their verbalization.

Kalivoda (1980) suggests some activities that can be used for practicing verbalization in the foreign language: "Oral repetition," "identifying key words," "paraphrasing," "answering questions" and "simultaneous listening and reading aloud."

RAPID SPEECH

Kalivoda (1980) says that the speed of speech is another

important problem area that students should overcome. Students should:

1. become skilled in the process of chunking,

2. make use of the advantage of spacing.

Teachers should program the material with longer pauses or give long pauses between utterances instead of slowing down the speed of speech.

VOCABULARY

Limited lexical knowledge prevents students from comprehending the message given by a speaker. This problem can be solved by using the following techniques:

- dictation of troublesome words,

- multiple-choice exercises,

- identifying connectors, false starts and attention
  claimers.

In his article, Stanley (1978) states that the problem of understanding native speech by a learner arises not only from facing new vocabulary, or new grammatical structure, or not recognizing the phonological code but it also arises from familiar vocabulary and structures presented like unfamiliar sound systems as well.

Rivers (1966) emphasizes the importance of teaching listening comprehension by stating that "Listening comprehension has its peculiar problems which arise from the fleeting, immaterial nature of spoken utterances." She also stresses the important differences between live and

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contrived language in terms of variations in intonation, redundancy, pauses, fillers and false starts (cited in Herschenhorn, 1989).

3) REAL-LIFE AND CLASSROOM LISTENING

According to Rixon (1986) there are six different types of understanding:

1. hearing all the components of a speaker's utterances,

2. understanding the gist of the message a speaker is sending,

3. guessing the meaning of unfamiliar words and phrases making use of the context,

4. understanding what is meant but not stated in so many words,

5. recognizing a speaker's mood or attitude,

6. recognizing the degree of formality in a speaker's speech.

Rixon states that there is a large variety of different listening situations, and Ur (1984) points out that there is not an available full-scale taxonomy of these types of listening situations with statistic analyses of their frequencies. This makes the listening comprehension task more difficult for learners. Nevertheless, it is possible to list some common listening situations that literate people are confronted with (Rixon, 1986). A list in random order of some listening situations used commonly by educated people follows:

1. listening to announcements at stations, airports and
   common places,

2. listening to the radio,

3. participating in a conversation face to face,

4. watching a film, play or television program,

5. taking part at a meeting, seminar or discussion,

6. participating in a lesson,

7. listening to a speech or a lecture,

8. eavesdropping on other people's conversations,

9. participating in a telephone conversation.

Rixon talks about the importance of learners' priorities, explaining that every situation is not equally relevant to every student. Students have different purposes in listening. Some have a desire to participate in conversations and some would like to be able to listen to lectures successfully. Although a student's needs may not be related to only one listening situation, it is still useful for teachers to list the situations their students need. A list of students' listening needs will certainly help teachers in selecting suitable materials and activities. Ur (1984) states that if the listening material or activity is suitable for students' need, students will complete tasks successfully.

Rixon (1986) analyzes each listening situation listed above in his book. He illustrates listening situations with a chart (Figure 1) with three parts. In the first part, he lists the listening situations from one to nine. In the

second division he shows the aids available for each

situation. The difficulties that listeners are confronted

with take place in the third part.

Figure 1: Listening Situations

Situation	Aids	Difficulties
1 station, airport announcements	1 visual back-up, notice boards etc 2 you can ask a member of staff for help	1 no possibility of asking speaker for clarification 2 distorted speech
2 listening to the radio	possibility of some background knowledge, eg The News	1 no possibility of asking speaker for clarification 2 no visual clues
3 participating in a conversation face-to-face	1 possibility of getting clarification from the speaker 2 visual clues - speakers' expression, gestures etc 3 the context of the situation	the need to plan your next contribution to the conversation while you are listening
4 film, play or TV	1 visual clues - speakers' expression, gestures etc 2 context of the situation	no possibility of asking speakers to clarify (and unacceptable to ask other members of audiences for too much help)
5 meeting or seminar	1 background knowledge of subject matter 2 possibility of asking for clarification	the need to plan your contribution while listening
6 taking part in a lesson	1 the teacher should be trying to make himself comprehensible! 2 visual clues - black-board work etc, provided by teacher	1 the possibility of being called on to answer unexpectedly 2 understanding the contributions of other students
7 talk or lecture	1 probability of some background knowledge or expectations 2 visual clues - board work etc, provided by speaker ·	1 frequently the need to take notes, involving selecting important information and writing, at the same time as listening 2 interrupting for clarification not usually encouraged
8 eavesdropping	motivation (curiosity!)	you start by knowing nothing of what the conversation is about. You need to 'tune in'
9 telephone conversation	possibility of asking for clarification	1 no visual clues 2 distorted speech

In situation "3," Participating in a conversation face

to face, listeners are expected both to speak and listen.

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The listener has an opportunity to get some explanation

from the speaker: moreover, visual clues-speakers´expression,

gestures, and mimics-and the context of the situationare very

helpful. However the listener has to plan how to participate

in the conversation while listening.

Situation "7" shows that listeners need to have some

background knowledge about the subject matter and also

visual clues aid them to understand better. But here,

listeners are expected to take notes selectively and listen

while writing. There is a complex combination of skills.

As the knowledge and experiences of foreign language

learners are limited to some extent, they have more

difficulties while listening. Rixon provides another chart

that shows difficulties of learners. He analyzes the

difficulties in two parts:

1. Understanding linguistically difficult texts. There
are three reasons that cause this difficulty:

- Recognizing of words in the stream of speech.

- Some certain unknown grammar patterns.

- Some certain unknown words.

   He also provides some suggestions in order to

   overcome this difficulty:

- learners should refer outside: using

   dictionaries, asking for an explanation and

   repetition will help them,

- they should take uncertain sections into account

   and wait for possible clarification.

2. Being unfamiliar with the certain types of spoken texts and their presentation and organization in the foreign culture. Rixon stresses that students should try to bring all their previous knowledge or expectations together before starting listening, and be careful about all the clues in the context or situations that will help.

Rixon claims that real-life listening not only causes problems but it also provides extra helping factors and safety nets because learners have the opportunity to use the physical environment and to ask for clarification and repetition from the native speaker.

Belasco (cited in Herschenhorn, 1989) stresses the importance of teaching listening comprehension and states that teachers should be eager enough to emphasize the phonology, syntax, semantics, and culture of a language in the beginning stages. He also says that live materials used in the classroom bridge the gap between basic foreign language speech and real foreign language speech. He recommends that using live language in the classroom will help learners reach a level where they can understand real foreign language speech.

Ur (1984) summarizes the characteristic features of most real-life listening activities with the list below:

- Listening for a purpose and with certain expectations

- Immediate responding to what is heard

- Seeing the person while listening

- Using visual and environmental clues in the context

or situation

- Breaking down most stretches of speech into smaller parts

- Most heard speech is spontaneous: thus formal speech is different in terms of redundancy, noise and colloquialisms and auditory character

According to Ur (1984), listening activities used in the classroom should carry the characteristic features of real-life listening as listed above; however, she explains that many books do not consist of such exercises. Most recorded listening materials are written texts and generally students listen to them without knowing what they are going to hear or why they are going to listen. Ur also adds that the exercises related to the recorded material are usually multiple-choice. She claims that this is a convenient technique to use in order to give students a certain type of practice; however, such activities never prepare students for real-life listening. Exercises should be related to the specific difficulties that learners are confronted with while listening to foreign speech.

Belasco (cited in Herschenhorn, 1989) clarifies that real-life listening skills can be developed in the classroom through the help of the use of interviews, newscasts, speeches, popular songs, and excerpts from original plays among other activities. Moreover he adds that listening should be separated from speaking and stresses the importance of using real-life language in the classroom.

Rixon (1986) suggests that there are two types of communication:

- transactional speech: The aim of this conversation is to get or exchange information
- interactional speech: People create this type of conversation in order to establish friendly social contact.

Rixon states that most listening materials used in the classroom are based on transactional language, and he says that interactional language should be given equal importance because students are in need of recognizing the native speaker's emotions, attitudes, or the relationship between the speakers in that culture. In other words, learners should understand social situations. Teachers should emphasize these features and make students pay attention to them through the help of tone of voice, volume, and speed.

3) TOWARDS A LISTENING TAXONOMY

According to Lundsteen (1979), teachers who believe in the benefits of careful planning and do not isolate listening from other skills are more successful than teachers who roughly say "I am going to teach more listening." The former teachers' students progress in listening more rapidly as they are aware of a specific sequence of listening. The most effective teacher helps the student achieve cognitive and affective goals at the highest levels through the help of listening skill because the student learns to get meaning

and thinking beyond listening.

When teachers are asked what listening is, it is difficult to get a correct definition. Moreover they are unable to list listening skills. Let's think of A, B, C's of a listening method. This method generates these skills. These three letters symbolize three levels, from simple to intellectually complex. The lowest level of skills is represented by "A". Basic discrimination of sounds level is represented by "B" and "C" symbolizes comprehension of the meaning of sounds. In order to reach the level "C", that is, to comprehend the meaning of sounds, learners should be able to recognize sounds and then be aware of the basic discrimination among sounds. Without comprehending meaning, they can neither think nor talk about it.

Lundsteen states that if teachers follow this method, the second job for them is to clarify the types of sounds. There are three types of sounds. The first type of sounds are produced in nature, second one is produced by artificial objects and the last type of sounds is made in speaking. Discrimination of these sounds and the levels of listening skills go hand in hand. When learners reach the third level of sounds, it means that they are able to comprehend the meaning of sounds and reach the more intellectually complex level. If teachers connect these two levels of skill and sound, it is said that they can identify listening program objectives.

Figure 2: Combination of the A, B, C's of Listening with

   Types of Sound

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                          Levels of Sounds
                      I.        II.       III.

         Levels  A. ┌─────────┬─────────┬─────────┐
                    │         │         │         │
                    │         │         │         │
         of Skills B.├─────────┼─────────┼─────────┤       ·
                    │         │         │         │
                    │         │         │         │
       for Listening C.├─────────┼─────────┼─────────┤
                    │         │         │░░░░░░░░░│
                    │         │         │░Language comprehension
                    └─────────┴─────────┴─────────┘
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   The skill of comprehension should be clarified. Here it
is necessary to talk about <u>Bloom's Taxonomy of Educational
Objectives</u> because listening skill development goes from simple
to more complex and from smaller units to larger ones.
Figure 3 classifies listening comprehension skills.

Figure 3: Classification of Listening Comprehension Skills

Comprehension Skills	Units of Language Organization			
	Word	Sentence	Paragraph	Total Composition
General Listening Knowledge of specifics			X_1	
Comprehension				
Application				
Analysis				X_2
Synthesis				
Critical Listening Evaluation				

   If six levels of comprehension seem too complicated,
they can be divided into two levels: "general listening" and

"critical listening." If learners are able to evaluate the
spoken material using highly conscious criteria after they
have comprehended the material, this means that they have
reached the critical listening level. This divides Bloom's
Taxonomy into two parts. The first five levels are put into
the "general listening level" and the "critical listening
level" goes with the evaluation level. They have the same
meaning more or less. The critical listening level is the
most difficult level to reach.

Lundsteen points out that the critical level includes
the lower levels of Bloom's Taxonomy. However critical
listening comprehension cannot be observed directly. It is
possible that the critical listening skills are found out
in the following way:

- authors first begin to examine their own mental
  activities while they listen,
- while they examine these activities, they try to find
  out the processes they employ,
- eventually, they present their tests to a panel of
  judges.

The teacher is told that comprehension of facts is
an important listening skill to take into account but the
definintions of this skill never explain what a "fact"
might be or how to decide if it is "important." The two
levels mentined above are supported by two hierarchies:
one supports "critical listening" and the other supports
"general listening." Verbs play an important role in

describing objectives; sometimes several of the verbs can
present an objective in the hierarchies, especially if the
verb refers to the last and the most complex level
"constructing."

The objectives are determined according to the final
tasks to be performed successfully by the learner. The
hierarchy of objectives displayed in Figure 4 supports
general listening skills.

Figure 4: A Hierarchy of General Listening Objectives
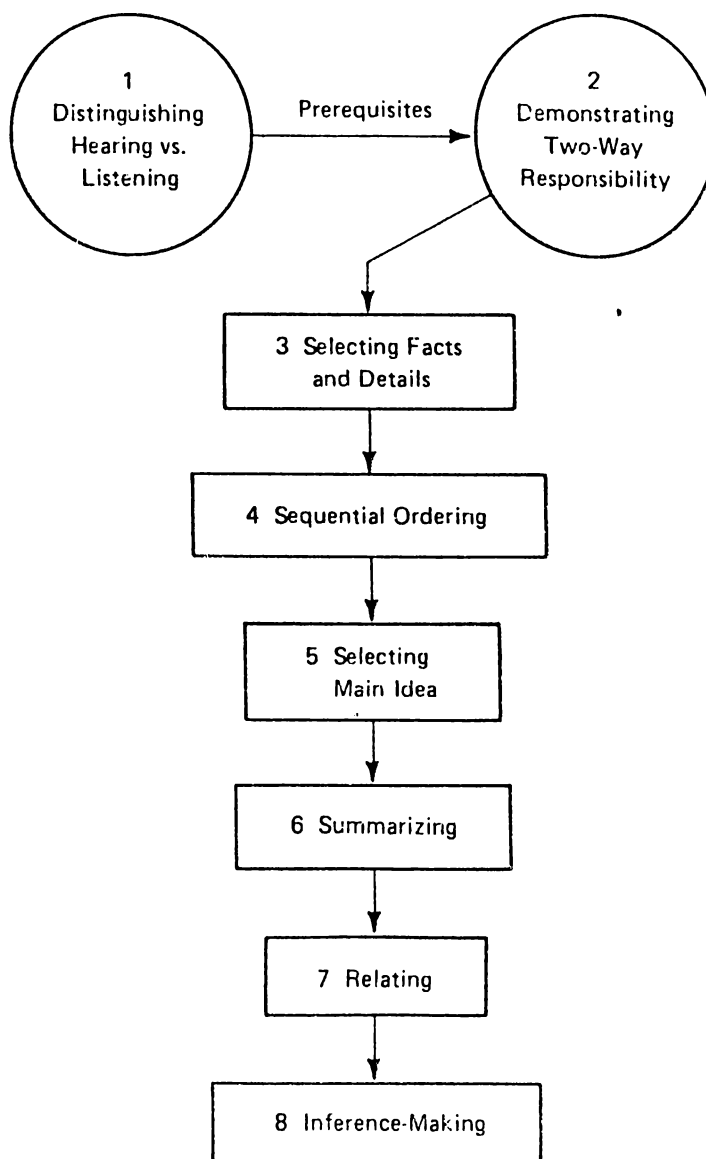
The hierarchy of objectives shown in Figure 5 is a supporting one for critical listening skills.

Figure 5: A Hierarchy for Critical Listening
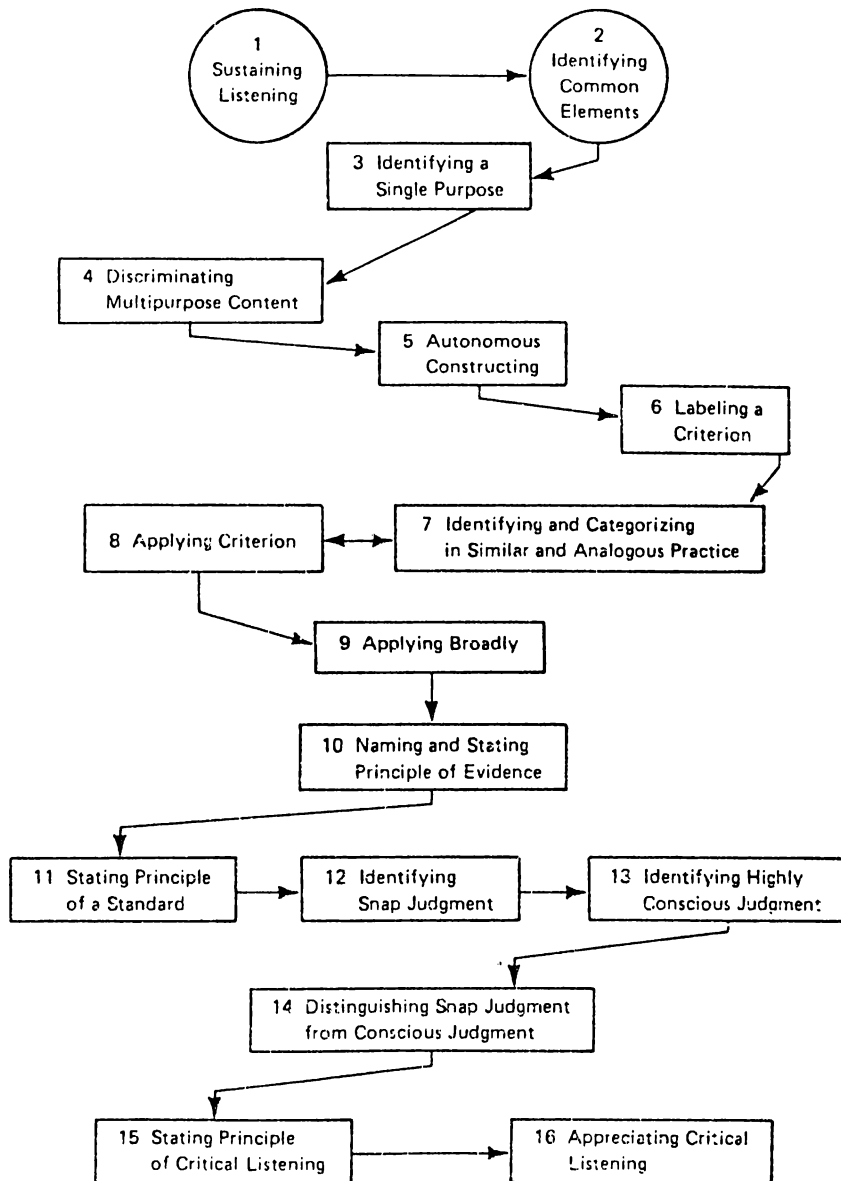
The two hierarchies shown in Figures 4 and 5 give the teacher a quick overview of the behaviors of the learner to be exhibited and evaluated.

Considering the information presented here, it is claimed that the skill of listening is much more than auditory discrimination. It includes not only percepting sound, but also attention span, memory storage, understanding of the speaker's purpose, mental activities. Lundsteen advocates that it progresses from a simple to a more complex process. A skilled listener has not only a wide range of basic competencies but also the ability to perform in a particular communicative situation.

4. STRESS AND INTONATION

Stress does not give any information about the mood or attitudes of the speaker as some people believe. This is the tone of voice that does this work. Through the help of stress, the listener can more easily understand the organization of the information the speaker uses, new pieces of information, known but still important information and the changing time of the subject (Rixon, 1986).

Tumposky (1986) states that stress exists not only in English but in other languages as well. Because of this reason, students should be informed about stress at the beginning level in their native language by providing them practice in order to have them identify the stress in their own names. After this session, students' names should be written on the

board, and stressed syllables should be indicated. This is one way of practicing word stress. Tumposky's other suggestion is to list words that are used in daily life. The words should be categorized according to the places of stressed syllables:

    fegato   marito

    polipo   amore

    libero   cancello

(These words are taken from the Italian language as examples)

Through the help of this technique, students are familiarized with one of the theoretical sides of language.

Tumposky suggests a few more ways to practice word stress:

1. Teach students some common English first names and have them repeat and identify the stress. It is vital that students should be aware that most English first names have stress on the first syllable.

2. Have students repeat in chorus after you or after a tape; although this activity has a limited value, it is useful to build confidence and warm-up.

3. Have students recognize the stress in a word.

4. Utter two words and have students recognize if the words have the same or different stresses. Here students can be provided a grid to mark different or the same stresses:

	THE SAME	DIFFERENT
1.	X	
2.		X
3.		
4.		

This is another type of traditional minimal-pair distinction activity.

5. Divide the class into two groups (according to the number of students, they can be divided into more groups) and have each group identify the stresses of the words that the other group uttered.

6. Have small groups select a topic area (food, rivers, sports, capital cities) and ask them to find as many examples as they can and classify them according to the placement of stress in the words.

7. Be careful about pronunciation errors caused by incorrect stresses, and find ways to signal these errors.

8. Problem stressed words should be emphasized in all errors.

9. Have students read passages in order to practice stress identification.

10. Give students a feeling of confidence that they can ask where the stress is in a word, even at the beginning level.

11. Teach them how to use a dictionary and provide

practice in it, and explain that it is not necessary to
understand the phonetic alphabet for the recognition of
the stress in a word.

According to Rixon (1986) speakers divide their speech
into small "chunks" or sense-groups, and this is done by
slight pauses. He claims that each chunk or sense-group
provides different information. The study of "intonation"
consists of investigating what happens in each sense-group,
in terms of stress and tone of voice.

Rixon points out that speakers utter stressed syllables
louder and pronounce them clearly.

          I love furniture and carpets.
          ---- -----   ---

As in the sentence above, stressed syllables sound more
important than unstressed syllables; however, one of these
syllables is taken into account as the most important
syllable:

          I love old furniture and carpets.
          --- --- -----   ===

These types of stressed syllables are called "topic" or
"nuclear" syllables and these stresses are put in different
places in sense-groups rather than the last content word.
This means that the speaker is giving a signal that there
is some contrast or a particular piece of information:

          I'm going to Paris.
          =   ---

(Here the speaker is probably giving a correction. The listener may have understood that anyone other than the speaker is going to Paris, and the speaker is emphasizing that the speaker is going to Paris, not another person.)

Rixon stresses that it is not necessary to give students detailed information about nuclear syllables. Because they can easily recognize them even if they do not know much about nuclear syllables. Teachers can provide a lot of practice by asking students which syllable they hear is the most important. The nuclear stress can be marked with a different symbol on the board:

<p style="text-align:center;">   −   **</p>
<p style="text-align:center;">I´m going to Paris.</p>

There is no use in giving detailed information about intonation; however, they can be introduced with the most common intonation patterns in English; such as, the "falling" intonations that are mostly used at the end of utterances and the "fall-rise" intonations which help listeners recognize given and new information. Given information is played down and new information is highlighted:

<p style="text-align:center;">I´m going to Rome after Paris.</p>

The listener knows the fact that the speaker is going to Paris and through the help of the characteristic of "fall-rise" intonation, he recognizes that he is going to Rome as well.

Intonation is also used to change the subject. Whenever the subject is intended to be changed, the overall pitch of the voice is raised and spoken a little louder.

Although these aspects do not cause any difficulty in learning a language, it is good to explain them to students whenever they occur in the materials teachers use (Rixon, 1986).

Tumposky (1986) explains some principles in practicing sentence stress and intonation:

1. Organize materials from easy to more difficult, from known to unknown.

2. Relate the things done before with new material.

3. Use clear presentation.

4. Use different techniques and situations for practice.

5. First controlled than free production should take place.

6. Explain that all language comes out in meaningful contexts.

5. DEVELOPING LISTENING SKILLS

1. MATERIALS USED FOR LISTENING

According to Brown and Yule (1983) the selected material should be related to the aims of the course. They discuss the principles in order to choose a material for an intermediate course level and they claim that these principles can be applied equally to other levels.

i) Grading materials: by speaker

Brown and Yule explain that it is rather easy to understand monologues because students get used to the speaker´ style. It is easier especially if speakers slow down their speech. As long as they speak slowly, they speak clearly. However speakers should not slow down their speech artificially. It is desirable to find speakers who unconsciously speak slowly. Early stage materials should have the same speech style. As students progress in the process of learning a foreign language, students can be introduced with tapes with more than one speaker. It is preferable to begin with different sexes and then learners take the role of "overhearer." In the more advanced stages, students can be exposed to different types of accents.

Abbott and Vingard (1981) explain the features of dialogues and monologues.

Dialogues: They can be either scripted or unscripted. Unscripted dialogues are spontaneous conversations that take place between

> - the learner and other FL learners
> - the learner and native speakers and
> - other Fl and/or native speakers without the participation of the learner.

These conversations consist of a large quantity of repetition, rephrasing and hesitation and learners have a chance to be confronted with various types of accents. On the other hand, script dialogues usually take place between

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native speakers and generally they are authentic. There is also less redundancy and hesitation.

Monologues: Abbott and Vingard discuss three types of monologues:

1. Speakers outline the speech but they do not script. This causes repetition, rephrasing and hesitation.

2. Public announcements and spoken instructions are also monologues. In these monologues, information density is very high and generally they are very short. Accents may be different.

3. Formal scripted talks, lectures and news bulletins in spoken form are also called monologues. There is a little repetition and information density is very high. The speaker uses the standard accent. Abbott and Vingard claim that beginning level students should not be confronted with all these different accents.

ii. Grading materials: by intended listener

Brown and Yule (1983) say that most listening materials found on the market contain tapes of lectures, speeches, or dialogues between two individuals. Formal speeches and lectures are usually difficult to understand. On the other hand, while listening to dialogues students take the role of an overhearer and the contents of tapes are not related to the interest of students. Moreover, teachers do not know how to make them interesting. Students are not trained to understand real spontaneous speech. Brown and Yule claim that if learners

find something interesting in dull conversations they will try to do the tasks provided and become conversation analysists in a limited way.

In principle, teachers should find materials interesting to each student; however, it is generally impossible. At least they should try to have students carry out interesting things. A variety of activities will certainly promote teaching listening comprehension to some extent.

iii. Grading materials: by content

Except for university lectures or political speeches, complex syntactical patterns are rarely used in spoken form of a language. Brown and Yule claim that if learners have background knowledge about a particular speech, it is likely that they will understand making use of the familiar knowledge. Discourse should involve the learner in order to make listening more comprehensible.

iv. Grading materials: by support

Brown and Yule state that external support will certainly help learners achieve the tasks offered more easily. Especially visual support is much more helpful because learners see the participants' physical appearances, the language setting, the speakers' physical relationships, and their mimics and gestures which help listeners for better understanding. It cannot be denied how useful a video tape is for students in practicing listening comprehension.

Providing students a transcript of the spoken text is

another support. The written transcript should be in the form of spoken language because students can match the things they hear and think with the written language. Photographs, maps, cartoons, scientific diagrams, and graphs are also supportive materials in listening. In order to get desired results, students should be provided a great deal of helpful support.

v. Choosing materials: types of purpose

In a traditional class, teachers turn on tape-recorders and have students listen to dialogues or monologues and then answer the questions on tapes or on handouts. These questions are generally organized according to the written transcripts of texts and they consist of "facts" given in texts.

If the aim of the course is to have students listen to more than one kind of text, it is necessary that teachers should be careful in selecting materials because choosing materials should depend on not only the variety of topics but the purposes of texts as well. If a text consists of a short friendly conversation that takes place between two speakers, teachers should ask students the purpose of the conversation and observe strategies of being friendly which speakers show clearly.

If students listen to a discussion that takes place between two speakers, they should both deal with the "facts" the first speaker states and observe the second speaker's role in the discourse. The language of the text should be the one used in real life. Another important

point in selecting materials is that it is not necessary to give the same amount of time to these various types of texts.

The Ways of Providing Listening Materials

Rixon (1986) suggests three ways to get suitable listening materials:

1) Buying published material

2) Adapting published material

3) custom-made material

Buying Published Material: In the last few years, it has become easier to find materials which contain natural speech and useful types of exercises as the result of improvement in published materials. Before selecting materials, it is better to ask the publisher for a sample tape with selections of their materials. Since the catalog or publicity material consists of the explanation about the level, topic, type of speech and teaching approach, teachers can more easily decide which material is suitable for their students. Rixon explains a few points that are necessary to take into consideration before selecting materials:

- Can the school afford the expenses of listening tapes and students' books? If not, is your time available to make your own materials?

- Is there a place in the timetable for listening classes or can you create time within your normal classes?

- Are you in need of any special equipment or classroom

arrangements in order to use the materials you selected?
If yes, is it possible to provide this?

Adapting Published Material According to Rixon (1986),
some text books contain very few exercise types for each
taped selection. However, by devoting some time and effort,
teachers can create extra exercises and activities for a
particular passage. Some units of a textbook can begin with
very difficult exercise types and students may not know how
to start on them. In this situation, teachers can create
their own pre-listening exercises in order to overcome this
problem.

There may be some passages that are too challenging for
students. In these circumstances, teachers can read these
passages slowly and clearly to encourage students to listen
to the tape with more confidence. If possible, teachers can
use tape recorders in order to record their own version.

Custom-made Material: Rixon states that it is not always
necessary for teachers to create or make their own materials.
They can also provide some recordings of radio and television
broadcasts, songs, plays, poems, and lectures. These types of
recordings are called "authentic" materials and they help
students to cope with native English speech.

Rixon claims that in many classes, live performances are
not paid enough attention. Teachers can provide extensive
listening practice by telling students a story, a fairy tale
or a joke from time to time. Inviting visitors to the classroom
and having them talk about themselves and their travels can

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also be very useful for students.

According to Lundsteen (1979) teachers should be very sensible while using listening materials in classes because individuals learn through listening in different ways. Unless teachers take individual difference into consideration, they cannot obtain desired results.

2. LISTENING ACTIVITIES

Rixon (1986) states that a listening lesson has three phases:

Pre-listening: In this phase, students are prepared to get the most from the passage they are going to listen to by making use of students' background knowledge and schemata. However, it is necessary to point out that students should not be informed about the topic and the passage too much.

While-listening: This phase contains activities and exercises related to the passage. These activities and exercises support learners to get the main information.

Follow-up: In this phase, students use the information they have got from the listening material for another purpose. Teachers can explain some crucial grammar points and vocabulary.
Also some of the features in the sound system of the language can be discussed.

In the following section, some listening activities are presented. The activities aim at encouraging students to develop listening awareness and strengthen effective

listening skills. Activities and exercises should be the
most important part of an intensive listening lesson. The
role of the teacher is very important in teaching comprehension
because teachers should try to have students get as much
information as possible from materials while listening to
them.

The crucial point which is necessary to point out is
that teachers should not use one type of exercise too many
times in order to prevent boredom.

ACTIVITY 1: A Fog Horn??

This is suggested by Wolvin and Coakley (1979). The
aim of this activity is to have students practice auditory
discrimination of everyday sounds.

A listening tape is prepared by recording everyday sounds
that are familiar to all students. The tape should contain
sounds such as a telephone busy signal, door buzzer, vacuum
cleaner and baby crying. Then students are asked to discriminate
among the sounds they are listening to.

ACTIVITY 2: Finding Out Information

According to Nicholls' and Naish's (1981) suggestion,
students are asked to listen to an authentic or teacher-made
tape and to find out people's attitudes through the help of
their tone of voice and the vocabulary they use.

The aim of this activity is to help students make use
of tone of voice and words that are used by speakers in order
to listen to material comprehensively.

ACTIVITY 3: Sequencing

Another suggestion given by Nicholls and Naish is that
teachers can cut up the script of a text, a dialogue or a
recipe into lines or sentences and then students are asked
to re-organize the cuts correctly while listening to the
original material.

ACTIVITY 4: Detecting Mistakes

Ur (1984) suggests that students are asked to listen to
a well-known story and find out erroneous details in the
narration of it. Mistakes should be related to reality.
A mistake can be a word, a phrase or a sentence that does
not fit with the original story. When students notice a
mistake, they can shout out or raise their hands immediately
in order to make the correction or they can write down the
findings and discuss later.

ACTIVITIES 5: Short Completion Exercises

McKeating (1981) suggests to teachers that they should
have students complete unfinished final sentences with
possible endings. Students should not be aware of how long
texts are or when the teacher or the tape will stop. This
will help students make predictions constantly about the
following information. McKeating warns teachers not to allow
students to shout out their predictions.

III. TESTING LISTENING COMPREHENSION

The main purpose of listening tests is to measure comprehension. One of the effective ways of developing the skill of listening is to use carefully selected material. Similar material can also be used in listening comprehension tests. It is desirable to separate speaking and listening skills in teaching and testing although they are closely connected in normal language settings. Unless the practice material depends on the other skills, it is impossible to develop listening skill.

Being aware of the differences between the spoken language and written language plays an important role in testing listening comprehension. In the spoken language, redundancy takes place and also speakers use intonation, pitch, rhythm, pauses. These features are essential for understanding the message given through speaking (Heaton, 1979). These features are taken into account in preparing listening tests. The ability to distinguish the differences between phonemes may not be sufficient to get the verbal message. In real life, learners are also in need of contextual clues in order to comprehend what they hear.

While writing material for aural tests, important points should be re-stated, re-phrased and re-written. The segments in each breath group normally consist of 20 syllables and this is considered to be approximately the right length to let learners understand what they have received. It is desirable if the speaker can be seen by listeners. If a tape-

recorder is used for testing, testers should be sure about

the quality of the cassette and the tape-recorder moreover

they should try to prevent background noise. If these are

not provided, this kind of test cannot be reliable especially

while testing phoneme discrimination, stress, intonation

(Heaton, 1979).

In order to measure the validity of a listening test,

it should be given to native speakers. If these speakers

have failure in the test, it is said that this test is not

testing language but other factors (Lado, 1975). If the

test measures what it is intended to measure it can be

said that this test has validity. Validity is specific. So,

if a test of listening measures listening but not other

aspects, the test of listening has validity.

While preparing a listening test, linguistic descriptions

of the target and the native language are prepared so as

to compare the two languages. These descriptions help testers

to locate and describe the problems which occur because of

the differences.

1. TESTS OF SOUND DISCRIMINATION

One of the necessary steps in the learning of a foreign

language is to be familiar with the sound system of that

language, that is, to discriminate between phonetically

similar but phonemically different sounds in the target

language. At the beginning of the course, students may not

be able to distinguish different languages from the target

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language because those different languages may sound similar.

In order to make students develop a sensivity to the target

language, the teacher may record speaking of some people who

speak various languages and let students listen to the tape-

recorder so as to identify the target language (Valette, 1977).

TESTING OF SOUND DISCRIMINATION IN ISOLATION AND

IN CONTEXT

The purpose of this section is to provide teachers

with a list of ways of testing auditory discrimination

in isolation and in context. At the beginning levels,

since the sound system of the foreign language is more

important, students are to be taught how to hear,

pronounce, read and write sounds, and their knowledge

of the sound system should be tested necessarily.

There are eighteen item types presented in this

section. The first eight items aim at testing auditory

identification and discrimination in isolation and the

last ten items are constructed to test sound discrimination

in context. The techniques suggested in this section are

described by Harris (1969), Valette (1977), and Heaton

(1979).

ITEM TYPES:

TYPE 1:   Same or Different

Students hear pairs of words and are asked to determine

whether the two words in each pair are the same or different and

circle "S" for the same pairs and "D" for different pairs.

Students hear: On the answer sheet they circle:

1. "cot - caught"   1.   S   Ⓓ

2. "ship - sheep"   2.   S   Ⓓ

3. "law - law"   3.   Ⓢ   D

(Harris, 1969)

Valette (1977) suggests to use "A" for the same sounds and "B" for different sounds.

In order to prevent guessing, students can use word triplets. Students are asked to indicate the same two words among three words.

The student hears: The student circles the correct
                                  option:

1. "cot - caught - cot"   1.   Ⓛ   2   Ⓛ

2. "law - law - low"   2.   Ⓛ   Ⓛ   3

3. "sheep - ship - ship"   3.   1   Ⓛ   Ⓛ

(Harris, 1969)

TYPE 2: <u>Finding the Different Word</u>

The student is asked to hear three words and identify the different word in the group.

The student hears: The student marks the corresponding
                                  letter on the answer sheet:

A. gai B. gai C. gay   A   B   Ⓒ

(Valette, 1977)

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TYPE 3: Finding the Same Word

Students are asked to hear one word, after a slight pause, they are asked to listen to three more words and indicate which of the three words is exactly the same as the first word.

Here is an example item :

DOG   A. DUG   B. DUCK   C. DOG

Correct response: C

(Valette, 1977)

TYPE 4: Counting English Words

Students are asked to hear a series of three similar words. Some may be English, the target language, some may be Turkish. Students then are asked to give the number of English words.

Students indicate the answer as follows:

A. Only one (1) is English   1

B. Only two (2) are English   2

C. All three (3) are English   3

D. None (0) are English   0

Here is an example item:

METRE   meter   meter

Correct response: B

(Valette, 1977)

TYPE 5: Rhyme or No Rhyme

Students listen to two words and are asked to

determine whether the two words rhyme perfectly with

each other. The student indicates the answer as follows:

A. rhyme   **B.** no rhyme

Here is an example item in English:

    Sit   Seat

Correct response: B

<p align="right">(Valette, 1977)</p>

TYPE 6: Word With No Rhyme

    The student listens to three words and determine which word

does not rhyme with the others and circles the corresponding

letter.

Here is a sample item:

A. Measure   **B.** Literature   **C.** Pleasure

Correct response: B

<p align="right">(Valette, 1977)</p>

TYPE 7: Which Words Are the Same?

    The student hears three similar words and is asked

whether all three words are the same or two are the same

or all are different. The student listens to groups of

three similar words:

1.   A. bed   B. bad   C. beard

2.   A. road   B. rod   C. rod

3.   A. seat   B. seat   C. beat

4.   A. pick   B. pick   C. pig

Then the student circles the corresponding letters:

1.	AB	BC	AC	ABC ·	(O)
2.	AB	(BC)	AC	ABC	O
3.	(AB)	BC	AC	ABC	O
4.	(AB)	BC	AC	ABC	O

(Heaton, 1979)

TYPE 8: Indicating the Same Word

The student hears one word. On the answer sheet, four words are printed in an ordinary type and one of them is the letter corresponding to the correct word.

1. (spoken)   den

   (written)   A. den   B. ten   C. Ben   D. pen

2. (spoken)   win

   (written)   A. when   B. one   C. wane   D. win

3. (spoken)   plays

   (written)   A. plays   B. prays   C. pays   D. brays

4. (spoken)   coat

   (written)   A. code   B. caught   C. coat   D. cord

(Heaton, 1979)

TYPE 9: The Corresponding Utterance

Students hear two utterances and are asked to indicate which utterance corresponds to the picture on the answer sheet.

Here is two sample utterances in English:

A.   Here is a cat.
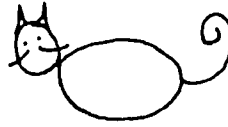
B.   Here is a hat.

The student circles the corresponding letter on

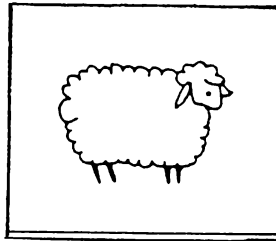the answer sheet:

Ⓐ   B

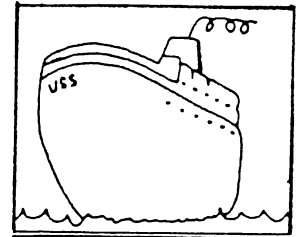(Valette, 1977)

TYPE 10:   The Corresponding Picture

Students hear an utterance and then they indicate

which picture in the text book illustrates the utterance.

Here is an example:

1.   "It was a large ship."

A   B

The student chooses the suitable answer written on
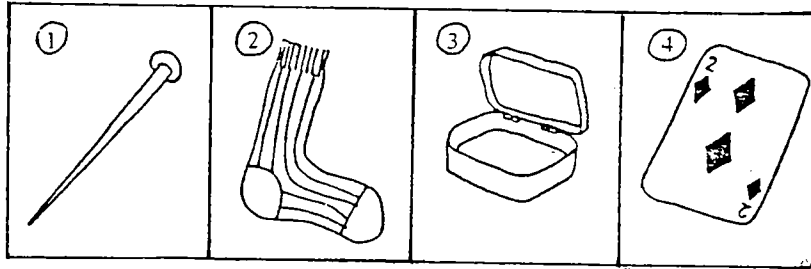
the answer sheet:

1.   A   Ⓑ

(Harris, 1969)

TYPE 11:   The Corresponding Word

A picture is used in this type of tests and three or

four words which are related to the picture are spoken to
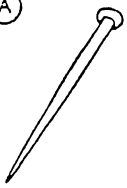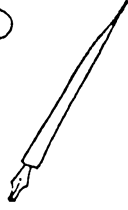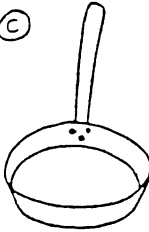
the student.

Students hear:
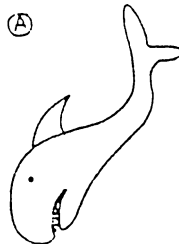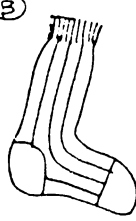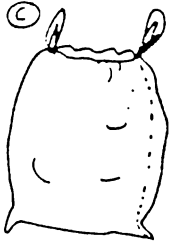
1. (A) pin   B. pen   C. pair   D. pain

2. A. shark   (B) sock   C. sack   D. shock

3. A. thin   (B) tin   C. fin   D. din

4. (A) card   B. cart   C. car   D. calf

After students hear each group, they write the letter that corresponds to the picture.

(Heaton, 1979)

TYPE 12: The Picture Corresponding to the Spoken Word

Four pictures are used and only one word is spoken twice, students choose the picture which corresponds to the spoken word.

Students hear:

     pain   -   pain

correct response: D

     sock   -   sock

correct response: B

(Heaton, 1979)

TYPE 13: Finding the Exact Word

Students hear sentences in which there are problem words and students are asked to choose the letters corresponding to the words which are heard in the spoken sentences.

1. (spoken) "I'll thread it for you."

    (written or spoken)   Ⓐ thread   B. tread

                           C. threat   D. dread

2. (spoken) "Did John manage to catch the train?"

    (written or spoken)   A. drain   B. chain

                           C. plane   Ⓓ train

(Heaton, 1979)

TYPE 14: Choosing the Correct Definition

The student hears one word twice and is asked to choose the correct definition of the spoken word among the four definitions given on the answer sheet.

(spoken)   watch   —   watch

(written)   A.   clean with water

                  B.   an insect like a bee

                  C.   look

                  D.   a word used to ask question

<div align="right">(Heaton, 1979)</div>

TYPE 15: Indicating the Same Sentences

    A group of sentences in which a single distinction in sound affects the meaning is given and the student is asked to listen to them and point out which sentences are the same.

1.   A.   There is a **bend** in the middle of the road

      B.   There is a **bend** in the middle of the road

      C.   There is a **band** in the middle of the road

    The student circles the correct combination on the answer sheet:

1.   AAA   AAB   ABA   ABB   ABC

<div align="right">(Heaton, 1979)</div>

TYPE 16: Indicating the Appropriate Sentence

    Students hear a single sentence followed by sentences "A" and "B". Sentences "A" and "B" are given on the answer sheet.

Here is an example test item in English:

The student hears:

He should always tell the truth.

<div align="center">53</div>

The student reads the sentences "A" and "B" on the

answer sheet and circles the best sentence that completes

the idea in the spoken sentence.

A.   I don't want him to lie on the beach.

(B.)   I don't want him to lie any more.

<div align="right">(Valette, 1979)</div>

TYPE 17:   Indicating the Following Sentence

The student hears a single sentence, followed by

sentences "A" and "B" and is asked to choose the best

one which completes the idea in the spoken sentence.

Here is an example test item in English:

The student hears:

We live on the "third" floor and The Browns live above us.

The student chooses the best sentence:

A.   So, the Browns' apartment is on the "second" floor.

(B.)   So, the Browns' apartment is on the "fourth" floor.

<div align="right">(Valette, 1979)</div>

TYPE 18:   Finding the Equal

Students hear a sentence and are asked to read simple

sentences in their text book and choose the sentence

corresponding to the one they hear.

students hear: In their book they read:

"It was a very large ship."   1. It was a very large

                                   (a)) ship - boat

                                    b) sheep - animal

On the answer sheet they circle:

1. (A)   B

(Valette, 1979)

2. STRESS AND INTONATION TESTS

It is necessary to keep in mind that students at the beginning level should be made aware that stress and intonation exist in all languages. After providing classroom activities in order to practice these features of language, various types of tests are used in order to test the ability to recognize stress and intonation.

In this section, a list of ways of testing stress and intonation offered. There are seven test items and the last three are suggested to test intonation. These seven techniques are described by Heaton (1979), and Valette (1977).

ITEM TYPES

TYPE 1: Finding the Sentence Stress

This type of test is used to test the ability to recognize word stress or sentence stress. Students hear a sentence and are asked to indicate the syllable that carries the main stress of the whole structure. They put a cross or a tick in the brackets under the suitable syllable.

Students hear:

1.   I've just given THREE books to Bill.

2.   My FATHER will help you do it.

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On the answer sheet they read:

1.   I've just given three books to Bill.

    ( ) ( ) ( ) (X) (   ) ( ) ( )

2.   My father will help you do it.

    ( ) (X) (   ) (   ) ( ) ( ) ( )

(Heaton, 1979)

TYPE   2:   Finding the Same Stress

        Students hear a sentence and are asked to read two

or three sentences written in their text book and choose

the one that describes the sentence they have just heard.

It is pointed out that letters indicate the stressed syllable.

Here is an example item in English:

Students hear: In the text book, they read:

  1. She is MY sister.   1. (A)) She is MY sister.

                                      B) SHE is my sister.

Students circle the correct one:

1.   (A)   B

(Valette, 1977)

TYPE   3:   Recognizing the Best Interpretation

        Students hear a sentence once and are asked to find

out the best interpretation of the sentence they have just

heard among three or four interpretations of the sentence.

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Here is an example item:

students hear: In the text book, they read:

  1. This is the man you saw.   1.   A) Yes, this one

                                          B) Yes, he is

       Students mark the phrase that best describes the

sentence spoken on the tape-recorder:

1.   A   Ⓑ

                                                (Valette, 1977)

TYPE 4: Finding the Incorrect Item

       Students hear a short dialogue three times. The

stimulus remains the same but the response changes each

time. Two of the responses are appropriate and natural but

one is unnatural and inappropriate. Students are asked to

choose the incorrect item.

Students hear:

(spoken) You can't smoke yet: Bill's father won't let him smoke.

        A.   But I'm older than Bill.

        B.   But I'm OLDER than Bill.

        C.   But I'm older than Bill?

Students circle "B" on their answer sheet.

                                                (Heaton, 1979)

TYPE 5: Choosing the Best Intonation Curve

       Students hear a sentence and are asked to choose the

linear pattern that most closely shows the intonation curve

of the sentence.

Here is an example item:

Students hear:

Is this a book?

On the answer sheet students find the best one:

Students circle:

(A)   B   C

TYPE 6:   Interpreting Through the Help of Intonation

Students hear a sentence and are asked to read the choices given in the text and choose the best interpretation of the sentence they have just heard.

Good morning   (spoken:)

In the text book they read:

A.   cheerful

B.   well, you finally got up!

Students circle: A   (B)

TYPE 7:   Choosing the Appropriate Description

Students listen to an utterance only once and are asked to choose the appropriate description to indicate if they have understood the original utterance. The same utterance may be spoken in several different tone-patterns

indicating a plain statement, question or sarcasm.

Students hear: On the text book they read:

1. Tom's a fine goalkeeper.   1. The speaker is

                                           A. making a straight

                                              forward statement

   B. being very sarcastic

                                           C. asking a question

                                                      (Heaton, 1979)

3. TESTING LISTENING COMPREHENSION THROUGH VISUAL MATERIALS

Most of the item types in this section are more

appropriate for the beginning level students. Pictures,

maps and diagrams can be used effectively for testing of

grammar and lexis through phonology. The techniques presented

in this section are described by Heaton (1979), Valette

(1977), and Finocchiaro (1983).

ITEM TYPES

.TYPE 1:   Utterances Related to the Picture

Listeners hear a list of spoken statements and they

are asked to identify the statements related to the picture

given in the text. For the statements they put a "✓ " at

the side of the appropriate numbers and put "X" at the side

of the numbers of the false statements.
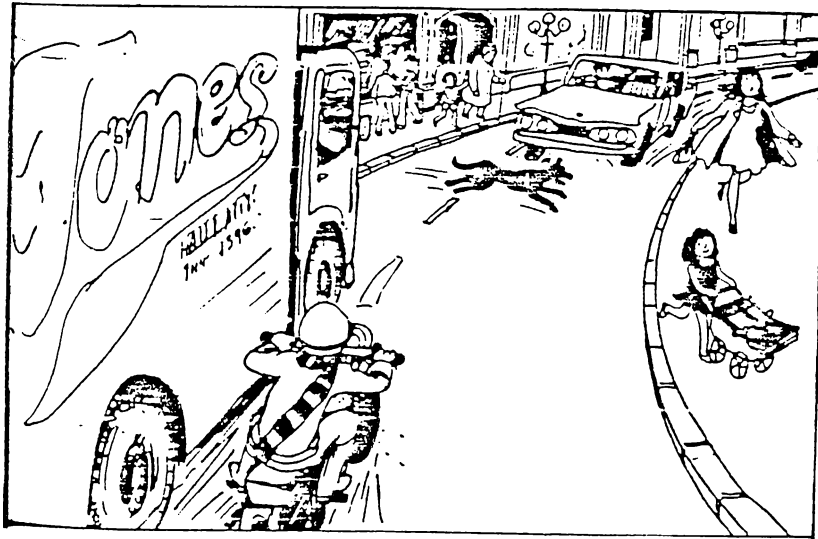
(Spoken)

1. The lorry's passing the man on the motorbike.

2. The car's traveling in the same direction.

3. A dog's running in front of the car.

4. A little girl's running after her mother.

5. There are two dolls in the pram.

6. A girl's pushing the pram.

7. the two boys are looking in a shop window.

8. A very small boy's helping the old woman.

1. ✓ 2. ✗ 3. ✓ 4. ✗
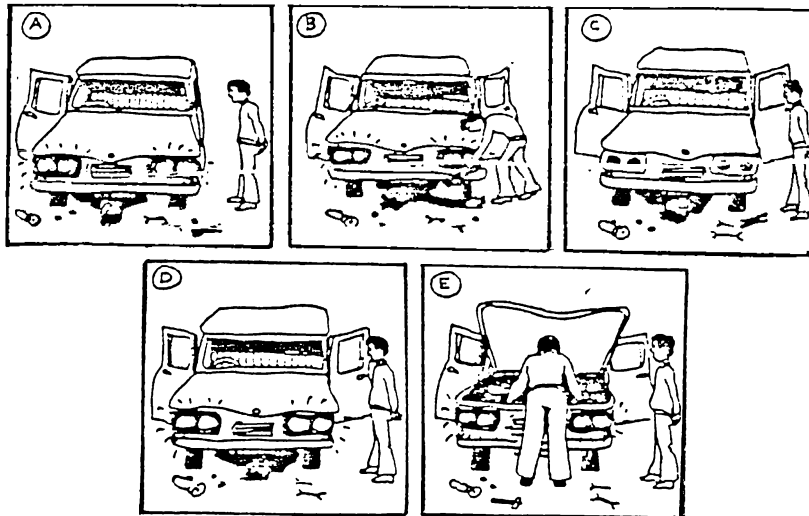5. ✓ 6. ✓ 7. ✓ 8. ✓

(Heaton, 1979)

TYPE 2: Choosing the Appropriate Picture

     After the tester gives students a set of pictures,
students hear four sentences and then they select the

appropriate picture being described.

Students hear:

1. Both car doors are open.

2. It's daylight but both headlamps are on.

3. The man who's repairing the car lying underneath it.

4. Although the boy sees the man working hard, he doesn't help
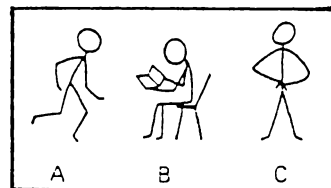
   him.

(Heaton, 1979)

TYPE 3: The Picture Corresponding to the Utterance

     Students are given a set of pictures and are required

to indicate which picture corresponds to the statement
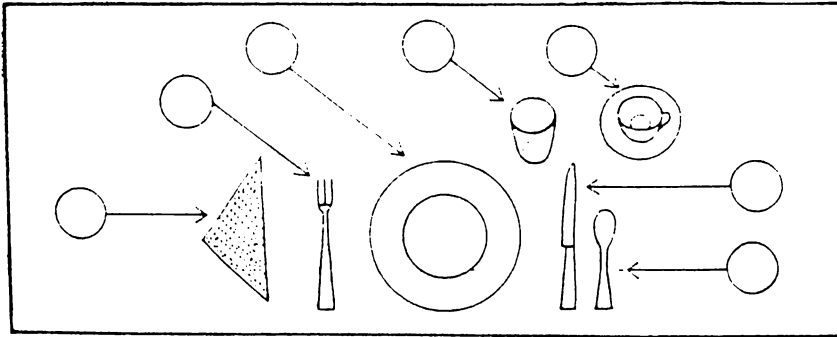
they hear:

(spoken)

The boy is running.

Students circle "A" on their answer sheet.

TYPE 4: Following the Instructions in the Picture

The teacher prepares a drawing with arrow pointing

to the vocabulary items to be tested.

(spoken) You will hear Mary's mother telling her to set

the table. Write the number of each statement in the
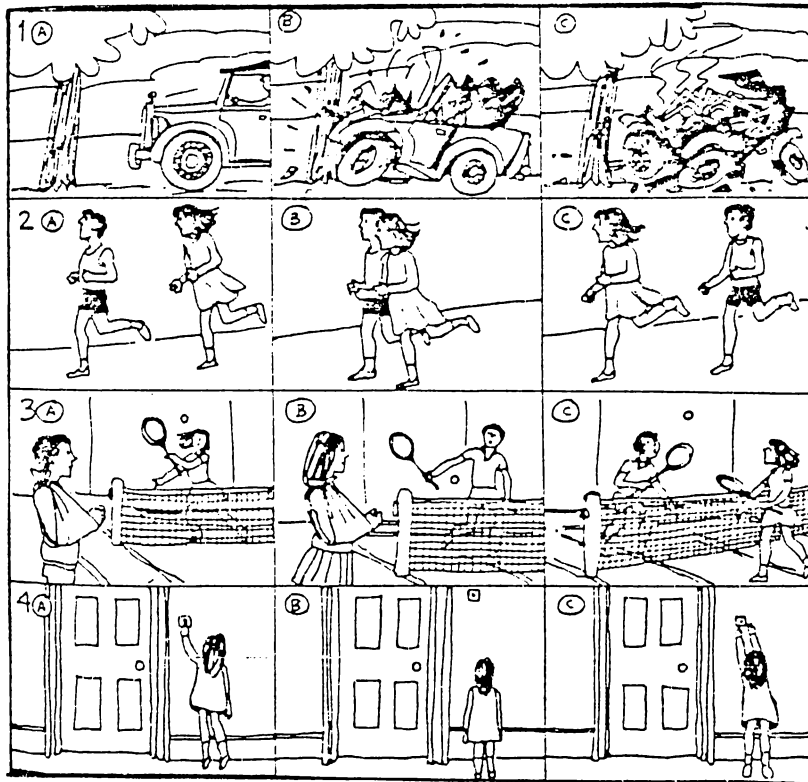
circle corresponding to the item she mentions.

1. Take the large plates.

2. We will use the red napkins today.

3. Each person should have one fork.

TYPE 5: Choosing the Best Picture Described

by the Utterance

The student is given a set of 3 or 4 pictures and

hears a statement and is asked to select the most

appropriate picture.

The student hears:

1. The car's going to crash into the tree.

2. Bill can't run as fast as Mary.

3. Tom wishes his sister could play tennis with him.

4. The switch is so high that Ann can't reach it.

On the answer sheet the student circles:

1. (A) B C   2. A B (C)

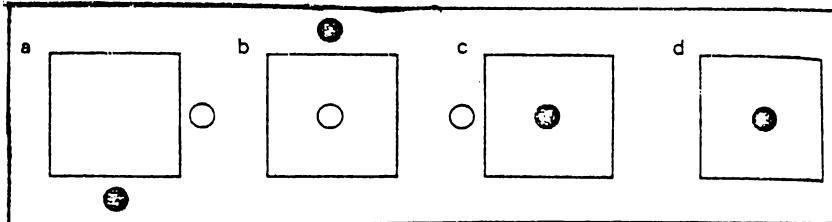3. A (B) C   4. A B (C)

TYPE 6: Finding the Appropriate Diagram

Simple diagrams can be used to function as options

in a test of elementary comprehension.

(spoken) Look carefully at each of the four diagrams.

You will hear a series of statements about each of the

diagrams. Write down the appropriate letter for each

statement.

(Spoken)

1. A white circle is inside.

2. A black circle is above a square.

3. A circle is on the left of the square.

4. Neither a white nor a black circle is in a square.

5. A black circle is under a square.

6. A square is on the left of a circle.

7. A square is under a black circle.

8. A black circle is in a square but a white circle is

    outside the square.
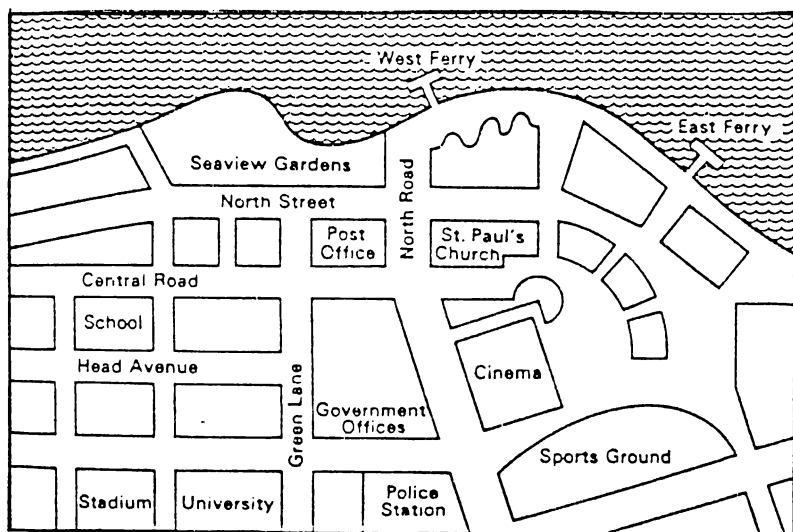
On the answer sheet students write:

1. b   2. b   3. c   4. a

5. a   6. c   7. b   8. c

(Heaton, 1979)

TYPE 7: Following the Directions on the Map

    This type of test is used to evaluate the student's

ability to understand simple instructions.

(spoken) You come out of school into Central Road and
walk in the direction of Green Lane. However, you take
the left turning just before you reach Green Lane. At the
end of the street you turn right. You cross this road and
you will see on your right...............(which building
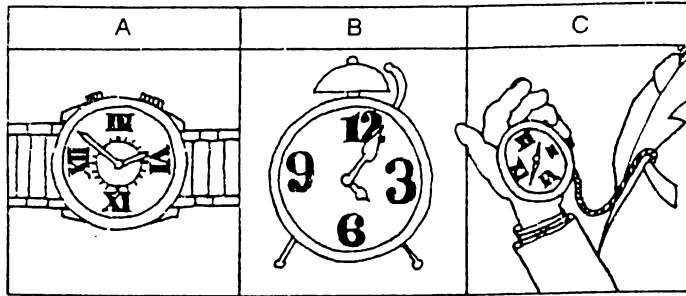will you see?)
Students trace with a pen/pencil the directions on the map
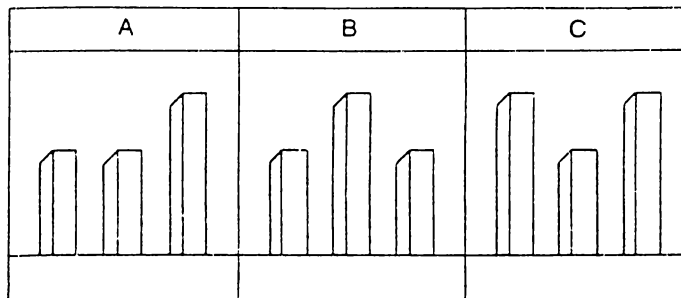given in advance.

(Finocchiaro, 1983)

TYPE 8: <u>Which Picture Most Suits the Utterance?</u>

The stem given to the listener can be presented in
question form, statement form, dialogue form or in a
combination statement and question.
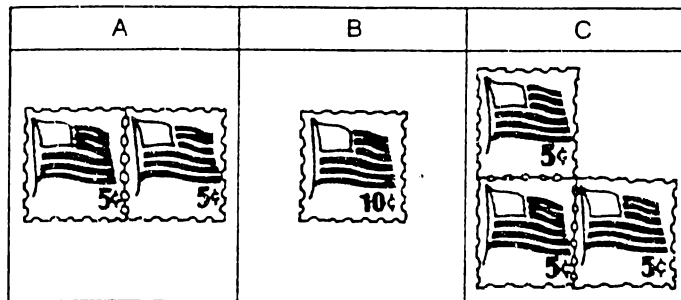
(spoken)   "which is a wrist watch?"

A	B	C

(spoken)   "The middle post is the tallest."

A	B	C
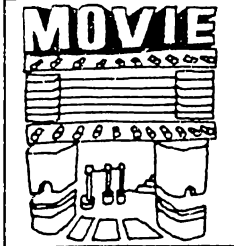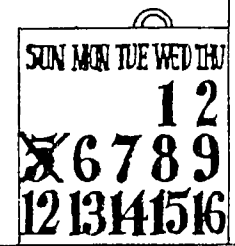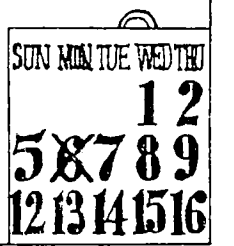
(spoken)   "what can I do for you?"

"Please give me two 5 p stamps"

A	B	C

(spoken) Today is monday. Mary went to the movies yesterday.

When did she go?

A	B	C
MOVIE	SUN MON TUE WED THU 1 2 ~~5~~ 6 7 8 9 12 13 14 15 16	SUN MON TUE WED THU 1 2 5 ~~6~~ 7 8 9 12 13 14 15 16

The student is asked to circle the appropriate letter.

1.   (A)   B   C

2.   A   (B)   C

3.   (A)   B   C

4.   A   (B)   C

(Finocchiaro, 1983)

4. STANDARDIZED LISTENING TESTS

Standardized listening tests aim at examining general areas of language teaching. Devine (1982) explains that there are a few standardized tests which have been developed and some are still up-to-date. The "Brown-Carlsen Listening Comprehension Test" (1955) has been developed in order to compare students with their peers in terms of measuring immediate recall, following directions, recognizing transitions, identifying meaning of words and lecture comprehension. The tester reads aloud a selection in a

manual and asks the test takers to answer the questions on
an answer sheet. It is proved that reliability of this
type of test is high and it can also be said to be valid
according to considerable evidence offered in the manual.

Another type of standardized tests is "Step" test (1956).
It is an achievement test used to measure comprehension of
main ideas, remembering significant details, understanding
the implications of ideas and details, and evaluating and
applying material that is presented. The teacher reads a
selection in a manual and has students mark correct answers
on an answer sheet. It is claimed that it is both valid and
highly reliable as well.

Both these tests have national norms and although they
were constructed in 1955 and 1956, they are still available
and useful for planning and evaluating a listening program.

5. TEACHER-MADE LISTENING TESTS

Devine (1982) points out that these types of tests
focus on specific listening skills rather than general areas.
There are five main types of teacher-made listening tests:

- informal appraisals

- content checks

- taped tests

- story tests

- real-life situations

A) Informal appraisals

Teachers keep simple checklists for each student in

the class. Ten questions are constructed in terms of
general listening skills. Teachers make a schedule of an
informal appraisal every two weeks and write their answers
to the questions with the dates.

Figure 6, below, shows a simple checklist for appraising
listening skills of a student:

Figure 6: A Simple Checklist for Appraising Listening Skills

Name of Student_____

Listening Behaviors and Habits	Dates Observed							
1. Does he/she get ready to listen?								
2. Does he/she keep attentive during oral presentation?								
3. Is less attention paid to fellow students than teacher?								
4. Does he/she look at speaker?								
5. Does his/her behavior show interest?								
6. Does he/she take notes?								
7. Do his/her comments indicate a grasp of talk?								
8. Is he/she polite when the teacher tasks?								
9. Is he/she polite when other students talk?								
10. Does he/she ask questions?								

There is another type of checklist that can be used to measure more specific skills. Specific listening skills are listed on the left side of the page and boxes are used to write the answers and the dates of observations. Moreover, a critical listening skill checklist would be helpful for teachers of English. Figure 7, below, shows a checklist for appraising listening skills of a student:

Figure 7: Checklist for Appraising Specific Listening Skills

Name of student_____

Observable Behaviors	Date Noted							
1. Is able to follow directions in a game such as Simon says								
2. Is able to follow specific directions on a guide (such as, "Put an X on the second line from the top: draw a circle around the third letter of your last name.")								
3. Is able to draw a map by following spoken directions								
4. Is able to fold a piece of paper as instructed								
5. Is able to repeat directions for a specific task to a fellow student								

B) Content checks

The aim of content checks is to find out which student fails to get ideas and information in listening presentations. The teacher prepares about twenty multiple-choice questions

related to a passage and then reads the passage aloud and
has students mark the letters corresponding to answers.
The teacher can prepare a tally sheet in order to compare
individuals with their peers in listening skills.

C) Taped tests

Instead of reading text book passages aloud, many
teachers tend to make recordings of them. Recorded passages
can also be used with several classes. After recording
passages, teachers prepare answer sheets, correct papers
and record scores. Another useful side of this type of
tests is that the teacher has a chance to sit on the side
of the classroom and observe listening behaviors of students.
These tests can also be used as listening materials in
teaching listening comprehension.

D) Story tests

While younger students like listening to fairy tales,
narrative poems, and favorite stories, older students like
well-told stories. On the other hand, With story tests
adolescents are provided an opportunity to listen to narrative
fiction. These tests are useful for both testing and teaching
and they are frequently used at the end of the day or week
for fun. Questions are prepared for important details in
order to evaluate the skill of note-taking of important
points while listening. In some occasions, exciting class
discussions take place at the end of the listening activity
in order to improve critical listening skills.

E. Real-life situations

Real-life situations are sometimes used in order to evaluate listening skills. Teachers can record the conversations which occur in the canteen, in the teacher's room or at a meeting and prepare about fifteen questions to evaluate students in listening for details, following sequence and performing other skills of listening. This type of material can be used in follow-up sessions of lessons and other learning activities.

IV. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. TEACHING LISTENING

1. CONCLUSIONS

Listening comprehensively and fluently is only the result of wide exposure to the foreign language and a lot of practice in looking for specific points of information in the spoken language.

Many English teachers tend to neglect the skill of listening because both teachers and students get bored in listening classes. The reason for this boring atmosphere is that most teachers use traditional techniques and students get used to these techniques after a few listening classes. Besides, most materials used in classes do not take students' attention as the situations presented in the materials are not similar to the situations that students can be confronted with in real language settings.

There is another point that is necessary to emphasize

is that most teachers of English are unaware of listening
comprehension and how students progress in the development
of listening.

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

In order to improve this situation in Turkey, teachers
should know what listening comprehension is and which
stages learners carry out to reach the level of native
speakers. Moreover, in addition to published materials,
teachers should find ways to make or provide their own
materials.

While teaching listening comprehension, the objectives
of the course should also be taken into consideration
because objectives are related to the needs of students.
Training students in listening comprehension should begin
in the very early stages of language learning. Teachers play
an important role in providing opportunities for students to
listen to native English speech and coordinating various
types of available activities.

All English teachers should know that listening
comprehension is not a skill that can be completed or
neglected somewhere in the process of language learning.
Listening comprehension increases when there is growth in
vocabulary and grammar therefore, providing regular practice
with increasingly difficult materials results in better
comprehension in listening.

B. TESTING LISTENING

1. CONCLUSIONS

In the third section of the project, testing listening comprehension is emphasized and various types of tests of sound discrimination, stress and intonation, and comprehension through visual materials are presented. Moreover, some standardized listening tests and teacher-made tests are mentioned.

Listening tests are used to measure comprehension in listening and materials selected for the purpose of testing listening play a very important role in measuring and evaluating students' comprehension effectively.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

All types of test items presented in this paper are useful for testing and also teaching listening comprehension. These test items are used in informal tests. Finding or constructing visual materials is easy enough for most English teachers. The only problem that they can be confronted with is finding native or native-like speakers of English. As it is desirable to record these types of speakers' speech for the spoken parts of the items, any teacher who really believes in the benefits of teaching listening skills can find sources which they can use in testing listening.

There are native or native-like speakers of English working for the American and British Embassies. Teachers

can ask the help of people. If there is still difficulty

in finding English speakers, colleagues who know English

well can be helpful in order to introduce different accents

to students.

As Devine (1982) points out in his book, these taped

materials can also be used each year with several classes

for testing listening and listening comprehension activities.

Another important point is that teachers should be sure

about the quality of the tape-recorder to get the desired

results.

Teachers should also be aware of the differences

between spoken and written language in order to develop

reliable and valid listening tests.

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RESUME

I was born in Ankara in 1959. I studied for primary education in Ankara, and I completed my secondary education at Etlik High School in Ankara. In 1981, I enrolled in Gazi University, Gazi Egitim Faculty, English Department for my undergraduate education. Soon after graduation, I started teaching English at Yukselish College in Ankara. Since 1987, I have been working as an English instructor at Gazi University.