



北京市高等教育精品教材立项项目

*English Teacher Education Series*

英语教师教育丛书

# EFL TEACHING: SKILLS AND TECHNIQUES

## 英语教学法 ——技能与技巧

杨 阳 主编



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## 丛书前言

为了指导高等师范英语专业学生及具有一定基础的广大英语学习者有效地学习英语,为了向社会输送大批优秀的英语师资及英语人才,为了参与并鼓励全国更多的大中小学教师投身教师教育改革,提升自身专业素质及英语水平,首都师范大学外语学院英语教育系部分教师在多年教学科研的基础上编写出《英语教师教育丛书》。本丛书填补了高师院校学法教法类系列教材的空白,具有一定的理论意义和较强的实用价值。

本丛书从内容到编排上有几个值得关注的特色。

### 1. 贯穿大学4年,各有侧重

这套丛书由4本分册组成,每一分册针对某一年级学生特点侧重一个主题。丛书各本侧重如下:

- 1) 一年级新生刚入学,心态各异,充满兴奋、憧憬。但有一点是相同的:绝大多数学生对中学到大学的转变准备不足。为了帮助学生尽快顺利完成这一过渡,尽早步入高校的学习轨道,我们为一年级学生撰写了《英语学习策略——成功之路》,从语音语调到听说读写,从篇章结构到考试技巧,从课堂笔记到记忆改善,乃至如何使用图书馆资源等都提供了详尽的指导与范例。
- 2) 学生升入二年级后,面临着夯实专业基础、通过专业四级考试、拓宽视野、提高能力等系列任务。经历一年的大学学习生活后,许多学生少了刚入学的兴奋与热情,多了一些冷静与思索。这一阶段学生的心理及情绪会因种种压力波动起伏,也有的同学会因处理不当而退步落后。因此,我们有所侧重地向二年级学生推出《英语学习心理——实用教程》,从心理学起源、理论知识、学生学习心态实例分析及解决问题的建议和途径等各个层面折射反映大学生的心理特点,提供如何调控心理的策略及指导。
- 3) 大三意味着本科学习高级阶段的开始,教学从语言技能教学转向内容教学。除专业必修课外,学生应根据自己的兴趣及能力加大专业选修课的学习力度,并在专业上向纵深发展,学习相关的理论知识,加强专业素养。针对这一阶段的学生,我们编写了《第二语言习得——理论与实践》,介绍第二语言习得研究,包括语言学习的外部因素、内部因素、学习者因素等,并结合中国学生的语言学习的实际举出实例。本书从学的角度帮助学生认识语言学习规律,全面认识语言教学。
- 4) 四年级学生要经过教育实习、撰写论文及毕业分配等几个关口,其中教育实习对其他几个环节起着至关重要的作用。许多学生对教育实习这个从学到教的转变心中无底。为了帮助学生为教育实习及今后的工作提前做好理论、技能、心

理等各项准备,我们推出丛书之四《英语教学法——技能与技巧》,对听说读写及教案设计、课堂管理等诸项教学技能与技巧进行了深入浅出的阐述。本书从教的角度入手,不仅渗透了先进的教学理念,而且提供了大量的范例供学生参考。学生通过阅读本书及自身的思索实践,不仅能学到教的技巧方法,而且能在了解运用这些技巧的同时大大提高自身听说读写的能力及语言综合运用能力。这本书也可在大三使用,教师可根据学生实习安排进行调整。

## 2 理论联系实际,针对性强

此套丛书的编者均为高校一线教师,他们在多年的教书育人及教学科研实践中与大学生朝夕相处,对不同年级学生的学习习惯、心理特点、年龄特征、情绪变化、专业弱项、问题症结等了解得比较透彻,因而写出的教材理论联系实际,符合大学生的年龄特点及接受能力,针对性强,指导性强,有助于学生在学习思考的基础上取得事半功倍的效果。

## 3 语言简明精练,通俗易懂

由于本套丛书的读者对象主要定位在师范大学英语专业本科生及具有相应能力和基础的广大读者,因此我们力求语言通俗易懂,简明精练。涉及理论知识、专业术语时尽量深入浅出,多举实例,便于学生理解掌握,并在实践中演练运用。

## 4 体例设计新颖,特色鲜明

作为贯穿高校4年的系列丛书,4本教材的体例设计既有共性又有个性。共性在于每一分册的编排都有共同的形式,比如每册的各章都有综述或背景介绍,理解、思考或讨论等练习题以及本章总结等。个性体现在各册均有自己的内容特色,比如重点词汇、自测列表、强化练习、提示建议、推荐书目等。

此套丛书由杨阳、邱耀德、林立、潘淑敏担任主编,是集体智慧的结晶,是教师们多年来理论学习及教学成果的总结与升华。但由于编写教师教学科研任务繁重,时间精力受到制约,编写中难免有疏漏。不当之处恳请广大读者批评指正。

杨 阳

2005年3月

# Preface

Helping students broaden their knowledge and improve their comprehensive abilities efficiently is a difficult but worthwhile task all the school teachers have to face and deal with. This book is to, on the one hand, enlighten pre-service teachers on some teaching theories and teaching strategies before they start their teaching practice and their teaching career, and on the other hand, provide some ideas for in-service teachers to continue their teacher development and to improve their teaching of English. Apart from pre-service teachers and in-service teachers, those who wish to learn English efficiently and improve in particular their learning skills in listening, speaking, reading and writing can also benefit a lot from the book. Although the title of the book *EFL Teaching: Skills and Techniques* indicates that the book focuses on the teaching of English, some ideas reflected in the book embody learning skills and even go beyond. While you are touching on some teaching skills, you can improve your own learning skills at the same time.

The book consists of 16 chapters, focusing mainly on five areas: the teaching of listening, speaking, reading, writing and class management. The first two chapters discuss basic skills concerning teaching listening, whereas chapter three and chapter four deal with tips for teaching speaking. Strategies for teaching reading take up more space, covering chapter five to chapter eight, and the next three chapters go to the techniques for teaching writing. Last but not the least is the last five chapters which introduce some practical methods you can apply during teaching practice or in your English classrooms.

All the 16 chapters carry certain identical format from which you can learn better about the structure of each chapter and about the intention of the writers as well. At the beginning of each chapter you will see under the title some instructive sayings related to the chapter content. Following the sayings are chapter objectives, important terms and theoretical background, all of which will help you understand what kind of key ideas you are supposed to learn about, what sort of special terms representing essential ideas you should master and what type of theories and research you should know. Furthermore, you can find in each chapter samples and tasks which will help you understand chapter content better and reinforce your learning as well. At the end of each chapter a summary is given and some reinforcement activities are provided.

We do hope that this book can be of great help to those who wish to improve their English learning skills, teaching skills as well as their comprehensive abilities.

Yang Yang  
March 2005

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# Understanding Listening Instruction

*... of the time an individual engaged in communication, approximately 9 percent is devoted to writing, 16 percent to reading, 30 percent to speaking, and 45 percent to listening.*

*Tricia Hedge*

## Chapter Objectives

In this chapter, we'll analyze the process of listening comprehension and the implications for listening instruction. After reading this chapter, we should be able to

1. Understand problems of current listening instruction in China
2. Identify the component skills of listening
3. Explain the listening process
4. Investigate three stages of listening
5. Understand the implications for teaching listening comprehension

## Important Terms

The following terms represent key concepts of this chapter. When you read the chapter, please pay close attention to the definitions and meanings of these terms. Don't worry if some terms look unfamiliar because they are all defined in context.

listening instruction

bottom-up

top-down

communicative language teaching

pre-listening

while-listening

post-listening

implications

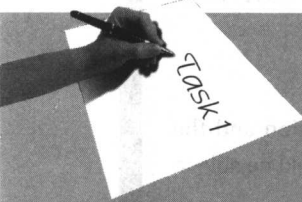


## **I** THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

*Listening is the ability to identify and understand what others are saying. This involves understanding a speaker's pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, and meaning. An able listener is capable of doing these four things simultaneously.*

*It is now widely accepted that listening plays an important role in foreign language instruction. Making the listening class interesting and rewarding is an urgent task for listening instructors.*

### **1 Problems of current listening instruction in China**



*Here is a lesson procedure intended to help improve students' listening skills: the teacher asks the students to listen to a short dialogue. Play tape once. When finished, quickly ask individual students several questions based on the dialogue. Check the answers. Tell the students who get the answers wrong and tell them that they should have listened more carefully.*

*In what ways do you think is the lesson procedure unsatisfactory?*

The present situation of the listening instruction in China is not very encouraging. As Brown (1990) points out, the students are taught how to memorize, but are not taught how to listen and how to cope with their listening problems. As a result, students often feel very bored. They complain that they have become tired of the dull listening class. Here are three typical problems in listening instruction:

#### **1.1 The traditional way of teaching still prevails.**

Introducing some new difficult words, asking the students to listen to the tape over and over again, and then giving correct answers are typical

activities. The teacher serves no more than “a machine operator” and “a key provider”. Such an approach to “teaching” listening is more like “testing” listening, because listeners are simply exposed to taped materials, and then are tested.

### **1.2 There is often a lack of interaction in the listening classroom.**

Teachers often use taped materials, but listening to taped materials in a group is something artificial. Unless the learners talk with the teacher or the fellow students, they cannot interact. They have to listen, usually for longer than is natural, and they must react to tasks that the teacher has determined for them.

### **1.3 What we experience in real life listening and what students are asked to deal with in the classroom are different.**

In “real life” we are required to listen in many different situations and for different reasons. Penny Ur (1984:2) offers a list of listening sources such as:

- 1) The news on the television or radio
- 2) Friends while having an informal chat
- 3) Others talking on their mobile phones or in a public place
- 4) Songs and movies
- 5) Small talk at a party
- 6) Discussing problems at work or at home
- 7) On the phone
- 8) Attending a class or a seminar

The list can go on and on. But these real situations are not always present in textbooks and are not always possible to recreate authentically in the classroom. This puts the learner at a disadvantage because they can't get context clues while they listen. Most of the time they are like listening outside a window to a conversation going on in a room they cannot see.

To be an effective listening teacher, one needs to be aware of these problems in listening instruction, and gain a better understanding of listening instruction by exploring the component skills for listening, the listening process, the three stages of listening and their implications for teaching.

## 2 Component skills of listening

In second language instruction, the consistent and systematic use of listening practice, through the use of tapes and oral interaction, by itself, constitutes a holistic approach to language teaching. However, beyond this holistic view, we can also take a more analytic view of the kinds of specific listening skills that learners need to develop. Here is a partial list of the skills needed for good listening:

### 2.1 Discriminating between sounds

Students may need to recognize the differences between /g/ and /k/ in the words *pig* and *pick*, or /i/ and /ɔ/ in *click* and *clock*. These words are called minimal pairs — they only have one sound difference between them but that one sound makes a different word.

### 2.2 Comprehension of structure or grammar

After hearing a sentence, the students should be able to work out the main sentence structure. For example, after hearing the following two sentences, students should understand the listed grammar points or structures.

◇ Sentence	◇ <i>Would you please pick the freshest peach?</i>	◇ <i>That is a very fat pig.</i>
◇ Grammar	◇ <i>Pick</i> functions as a verb or an action word.	◇ <i>Pig</i> functions as a noun.
◇ Word order or intonation pattern	◇ Polite request	◇ Statement of fact

### 2.3 Recognizing differences in stress

A difference in a syllable stress in a word means a difference in meaning. For example, re'cord is a verb and 'record is a noun. And a word stress at a sentence level can indicate different emphasis of information. For instance, the students need to tell the important point the speaker is stressing in 'Bill ate my bananas? Bill 'ate my bananas? Bill ate my bananas? Bill ate my 'bananas?

### 2.4 Guessing at unknown word

The students should learn to guess the meaning of unknown words according to the context. For instance, after hearing the sentence *Jane's new emerald-colored dress is as green as young bamboo leaves*, the listener can guess that *emerald* is related to green.

### 2.5 Guessing or inferring information

Sometimes a speaker does not directly state everything, and the listener must learn to “hear” and understand many things that are not directly stated.

For instance, a speaker says: *Yesterday, after Beth got up and ate breakfast, she went to the park*. Then the listener can guess or infer from the statement that: *It was morning; The weather was nice; Maybe it was Saturday or Beth was not working that day; Beth is old enough to go alone*.

### 2.6 Predicting information

A good listener can sometimes guess or predict when a speaker will say something important. For example, as a student listens to a lecture, he or she must predict when a new point is being introduced. Then the student can listen more carefully and take proper notes.

### 2.7 Skimming

It is not necessary to understand every word when listening. The listener just needs to get the main idea. This is called skimming. For instance, when students are asked to listen to a news broadcast and only need to know the main events of the day, they can skim.

### 2.8 Scanning

Sometimes people need to listen for very specific information. For instance, when people are in the airport, and they hear the loudspeaker making announcements, they may only listen for the flight that they are going to take.

### 2.9 Total comprehension

In this situation, the listener must understand everything. For instance, if people want directions to the train station, they must listen carefully and understand or they will go to the wrong place and miss the train.

## 2.10 Understanding different styles, emotional tones and varieties of language

Listeners should develop sensitivity toward language styles, emotional tones and varieties of accent, which greatly contribute to better understanding.

The following chart gives an example:

◇ Styles — formal or informal	◇ “Please, sir, would you be my honored guest?” ◇ “Hey, you, get over here!”
◇ Emotional tones — the implication of the message	◇ Angry: “Why did you do that?” ◇ Excited: “I am so happy to be in China again!” ◇ Gentle: “Don’t worry. You’ll be all right.” ◇ Sad: “I wish you didn’t have to leave so soon.”
◇ Varieties of accent	◇ British                  Australian ◇ American              South African ◇ Canadian              Irish

To be a competent listener in a foreign language, the students need to master at least the above-mentioned skills.



**Explore a range of textbooks, both general coursebooks and specific listening skills books, and find examples of activities which develop the following skills:**

- a. discriminating between sounds
- b. recognizing differences in stress and intonation
- c. guessing or inferring information
- d. predicting information
- e. skimming
- f. scanning

### 3 The listening process

---

Two views of listening have dominated language pedagogy over the last twenty years. These are the bottom-up processing view and the top-down interpretation view.

#### 3.1 The bottom-up process

The bottom-up processing model assumes that listening is a process of decoding the sounds that one hears in a linear fashion, from the smallest meaningful units (phonemes) to complete texts. According to this view, phonemic units are decoded and linked together to form words, words are linked together to form phrases, phrases are linked together to form utterances, and utterances are linked together to form complete meaningful texts. In other words, the process is a linear one, in which meaning itself is derived as the last step in the process. Anderson and Lynch (1988) call this the “listener as tape-recorder” view of listening because it assumes that the listener takes in and stores messages sequentially, in much the same way as a tape-recorder, one sound, word, phrase, and utterance at a time.

#### 3.2 The top-down approach

The alternative, top-down view, suggests that the listener actively constructs (or, more accurately, reconstructs) the original meaning of the speaker using incoming sounds as clues. In this reconstruction process, the listener uses prior knowledge of the context and situation within which the listening takes place to make sense of what he or she hears. Context of situation includes such things as knowledge of the topic, the relationship between the speakers, the place of the conversation etc.

These days, it is generally recognized that both bottom-up and top-down strategies are necessary. In developing courses, materials, and lessons, it is important, not only to teach bottom-up processing skills such as the ability to discriminate between minimal pairs, but it is also important to help learners use what they already know to understand what they hear. In teaching listening skills, the teacher needs to be aware of how these processes work and guide students, through the use of different tasks, towards using a balanced approach.



## 4 The implications for teaching listening



*Observe a listening lesson in your school. In what ways is this lesson communicative? In what ways not? How can it be improved?*

Learners have difficulties in learning to listen in a foreign language. Listening instruction must best meet the needs of the learners. Here are some general guidelines for making your teaching more effective and interesting:

### 4.1 Give the learners abundant exposure to a variety of input

Introduce your class to other speakers of English — personally or through use of video and audio tapes. Expose them to different types of people and situations. Encourage them to listen to understand things that are important to them. Teaching materials can include everyday conversation, announcements, storytelling, interviews, TV and radio news, English language songs, and so on.

### 4.2 Encourage the development of listening strategies

Predicting, asking for clarification, and using non-verbal cues are examples of strategies that increase chances for successful listening. For example, using video can help learners develop cognitive strategies. As they view a segment with the sound off, learners can be asked to make predictions about what is happening by answering questions about setting, action, and interaction; viewing the segment again with the sound on allows them to confirm or modify their hypothesis.

### 4.3 Keep track of the students' learning progress

Ask the students to keep a notebook or journal in class to write down what and how they are learning. Read these journals and give your own comments. Or you can tape an interview with a student on his / her difficulties with the listening skill and what strategies he / she adopts — choose a student who is fairly aware of this. Then use the tape with a group as a listening activity, introducing the strategies that he / she talks about. This is a stimulating technique that catches everyone's attention.

### 4.4 Provide support and encouragement

Listening is the language skill which learners usually find the most difficult. They often feel under unnecessary pressure to understand everything. The teacher should reassure the students that they do not need to understand every word they hear. Before doing a listening task, students should be encouraged to anticipate what they are going to hear. It is an effective way of providing support to those nervous students. This can be done by asking questions or using illustrations. Design tasks that engage learners. Do not make the task too complex. Always give a second chance to those who were not able to do the task. In a word, teachers need to help them approach listening positively — with a view to be entertained and informed and with the intention of succeeding at it.

### 4.5 Encourage the learners to practise listening on their own

Help them to identify ways of using English language media (TV and radio broadcasts, video tapes). Set up a self-access listening and learning center with a range of interesting taped materials and prepared exercises. Help the learners to develop their own self-study listening programmes, goals and means of evaluation.

## **II** STAGES OF TEACHING LISTENING

*To facilitate the development of students' listening ability, the teacher needs to develop lessons that guide them through three stages: pre-listening, while-listening, and post-listening.*

### 1 Pre-listening

---

In real life, when people listen to something, they usually have some idea of what they are going to hear. When listening to a radio phone-in show, they will



probably know which topic is being discussed. When listening to an interview with a famous person, they probably know something about that person already.

In our first language we rarely have trouble listening. But, in a second language, it is one of the harder skills to develop — dealing at speed with unfamiliar sounds, words and structures. This is even more difficult if we do not know the topic under discussion, or who is speaking to whom. So, simply asking the students to listen to something and answer some questions is a little unfair, and makes developing listening skills much harder. Many students are fearful of listening, and can be disheartened when they listen to something but feel they understand very little. It is also harder to concentrate on listening if you have little interest in a topic or situation.

Pre-listening tasks aim to deal with all of these issues: to generate interest, build confidence and facilitate comprehension. Specific aims and types of pre-listening tasks are presented as follows:

### **1.1 Setting the context**

This is perhaps the most important thing to do — even most exams give an idea about who is speaking, where and why. In normal life we normally have some idea of the context of something we are listening to.

For example, there is a dialogue about a man opening an envelope for presents (from *Cambridge Skills for Fluency: Listening* (1): P.28):

**A:** Go on. Open it.

**B:** Right. (laughs)

**A:** Go on.

**B:** It's not very big. You've already given me a card. (Yes) It's just like another card. Now, let's see ... Now then ... what? What is it? Oh no, this is ridiculous. (Laughter) This must have cost you a fortune.

**A:** No, it didn't.

**B:** Well, I hope you are coming too.

**A:** I am!

**B:** Bombay! A ticket to Bombay.

For this listening task, a pre-listening activity is used to set the context: