Overview Listening Comprehension

Listening an Interactive Process

Listening comprehension is the result of an interaction between a number of information sources ...

- *Acoustic input,*
- *Different types of linguistic knowledge,*
- *General world knowledge,*
- *Context ...*

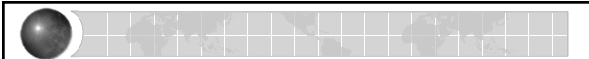to interpret what speaker is saying.

Buck, G. Assessing Listening, p.3

Language Competence

- Organizational Competence -
  - Lexicon, phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics & discourse structure
- Pragmatic Competence -
  - Sociolinguistic appropriateness – context-specific – frequently requires inferencing
  - Illocutionary - intent of message -- shared knowledge – requires inferencing

Bachman, 1990

Knowledge Structures

Schemata – structures to represent knowledge in memory

- Scripts – complex schemata – episodes
- Concepts, situations, events, sequences of events etc.
- Content domain

Question: *If listener shares same knowledge as speaker inferences can be made. If not, what happens?*

Context of Communication

- Context of situation
  - Non-verbal information may supplement or contradict verbal message.
- Cognitive environment
  - Listener's language competence plus knowledge structures influence interpretation of input.

  - **Question:** *What is the L2 listener's problem?*

Memory

- Echoic memory where sounds are held briefly,
- Working memory where input is held and most processing takes place,
- Long-term memory where things are stored for a much longer duration.

Processing Mechanisms

- ⊕ Controlled processing
  - ▣ Sequence of cognitive activities under active control
  - ▣ Problem: limited attentional capacity
- ⊕ Automatic processing
  - ▣ Sequence of cognitive activities occurring automatically
  - **Note:** *L1 speakers normal speed = 3 words a minute*
  - ***Question:*** *What happens as controlled processing increases?*

Interpretations

- ⊕ Interpretations vary because of ...
  - ▣ Listener distractions in general ...
  - ▣ Listener motivation ...
  - ▣ L2 listener linguistic problems ...
  - ▣ L2 listener background knowledge ...

Richards' Model for Listening

- ⊕ Determine type of speech event
- ⊕ Recall scripts relevant to situation
- ⊕ Make inferences about goals of speaker
- ⊕ Determine the propositional meaning of utterance
- ⊕ Assign illocutionary (functional) meaning to message
- ⊕ Remember and act on information while deleting original message.

Richards (1983)