



## ORAL COMPREHENSION AND STRATEGIES OF STUDENTS LEARNING FRENCH

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<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.12579506>

**Annotation :** This final dissertation is devoted to methodological issues in the teaching of French as a foreign language, in which problems of verbal comprehension and listening strategies are studied for students studying French. When it comes to research on listening comprehension and listening strategies for students learning French, there have been several recent advances in the field of language teaching. Researchers are increasingly looking at the importance of developing listening comprehension skills for effective language acquisition.

**Keywords:** understanding , verbal, strategy, listening , authentic, methodological , interactive , mobile applications.

Studies have shown that learners who are exposed to a variety of authentic communication situations and who regularly practice active listening and repetition significantly improve their listening comprehension. Listening strategies such as prediction, contextualization, repetition and note-taking are also essential to help students better understand and assimilate spoken French.

Additionally, the use of digital technologies and online resources provides unique opportunities for learners to practice listening comprehension at their own pace and according to their interests. Mobile apps, podcasts, online videos and interactive learning platforms are all valuable tools for improving learners' listening skills.

The needs of students, particularly those studying in French , have been widely identified. Research based on metacognitive theory and L2 listening theory has highlighted the importance of listening strategies for the academic success of these audiences. Flowerdew and Miller suggest a few ideas: 1) read the class notes and do the assigned readings before/after each class; 2) ask for help from peers; 3) ask questions in class; 4) make an effort to concentrate; and 5) supplement the course documents and readings with notes taken during the lecture. But these suggestions, while well-intentioned, may not be applicable in the context of large groups and vast differences in teaching styles, not to mention the feeling of alienation often felt by second language students. To be successful, these students must take charge of their own learning, which means becoming aware of their needs, how they learn, what strategies are needed to meet their needs, and how to implement those strategies.

Listening theory in foreign language learning is based on the principle that listening is an essential skill for acquiring and mastering a foreign language. Listening allows learners to expose themselves to the target language, improve their listening comprehension, develop their accent and pronunciation, and enrich their vocabulary.

Active and regular listening to the foreign language, whether through conversations, audio recordings, videos or podcasts, allows learners to become accustomed to the sounds and structure of the language. It also allows them to improve their ability to

recognize familiar words and expressions, as well as improve their fluency and overall comprehension.

It is therefore recommended that learners devote time to listening as part of their language learning, in addition to other activities such as reading, speaking and writing. Regular and varied listening can go a long way in improving learners' language skills in a foreign language.

Listening in authentic situations allows the student to become familiar with the sounds of the non-native language, it allows the learner to be presented with speeches rather than sentences, it leads the student to rely on the elements of the text and personal knowledge to understand an oral message.

Listening comprehension is not a passive activity, that much is certain. It is an active and complex process for a second language learner. The listener must be able to discriminate between sounds, understand vocabulary, interpret accent and intonation, and get used to the rhythm of a language different from their native language. Then he will have to retain what has been understood in order to interpret it in the immediate context as well as in the larger sociocultural context of a text or statement. It goes without saying that coordinating all these processes requires a complex mental exercise on the part of the listener. <sup>4</sup> Second language teachers have a variety of techniques at their disposal to help learners overcome this challenge. On the other hand, in contexts where teachers are not supposed to adapt to the presence of second language students, as is the case for subject teachers, immersion students must face the difficulties on their own. challenges posed by listening in a second language at the university level. Indeed, subject teachers teach their subject for native French-speaking students, whether this is actually the case or not. The difficulty is increased by the fact that immersion students find themselves confronted with a specialized language, the style of which is very different from that which they learned in primary and secondary school, which uses complex syntax and vocabulary. highly specialized.

Listening and oral comprehension (ECO) constitute a major pillar of learning French as a second language (FLS). Listening, now called oral comprehension, is therefore at the heart of language learning (Kurita, 2012). Thus, numerous studies on language learning indicate that OC plays an important role in the acquisition of a foreign language. It also strengthens our understanding and develops other language skills. Despite its importance, it has been ignored in learning, researching and teaching a foreign language for a long time. However, the signs of CO are undeniable in the practice of any language. So, the child, before starting to speak, records all the words in his memory and only after that he is able to express himself. It is for this reason that Krashen (1985) specifies that there can be no language acquisition if the learner does not understand the oral message. That is to say, we cannot learn and/or react without understanding.

Speaking of learning a foreign language, four language skills come into play to master a foreign language: listening, speaking, reading and writing. They are then divided into two categories of skills: receptive skills (listening and reading) and productive skills (speaking and writing). It is generally observed that productive skills are addressed with more attention by teachers in FLE classes. Nunan's (2001a) study on CO shows, for its part, that listening is a skill which has too often been neglected in favor of those of "speaking and writing" just like the example of Cinderella in relation to her older sisters. Because of this, learners practice listening comprehension less and consider this exercise more difficult.

Indeed, Vandergrift (2007) states that listening is the most difficult receptive skill for learners to develop because teaching does not prepare them to learn and listen effectively. Furthermore, teachers are not always aware of its importance and they do not use the language laboratory effectively to develop and improve listening skills.

This is why we think it is interesting to conduct a study that focuses more on the use of cutting-edge technology in the language laboratory and its relationship with listening. Listening comprehension is one of the four language skills defined in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). According to this Framework, CO includes a set of scales allowing a listener to understand a message or information through listening. This then becomes the basis of the work of the CO. It is therefore logical that “listening or oral comprehension” are the two titles of the same skill (CEFR, 2005: 54 and Bailly, 1998a: 32). Thus, it is possible to present CO as an essential skill which allows us to receive, understand and evaluate the information communicated to us.

This is the key to all effective communication. In this regard, Rost (1994) states that without the ability to listen, we cannot interpret and transmit our messages easily. In other words, without it, there appears a blockage in understanding and communication.

In language teaching, in the learning of foreign languages only, we cannot ignore the importance of listening in that it is at the very origin of understanding. Moreover, “it provides input (information) to learners and it also has an important role in the development of linguistic knowledge of learners and without understanding the information, learning cannot take place” (Rost 1994: 141 -142). (Our translation). This is why listening is not specific to the sense of hearing, contrary to what one might think. It is also strongly linked to speech since it leads to oral expression. In learning, receptive skills, such as listening, are often put aside. Because of this, learners may have less practice with listening comprehension. Furthermore, there, they encounter an additional difficulty in understanding the language when it is spoken by native speakers according to Rost (1994). An essential element follows from this: if the learner wants to learn to speak, he must first learn to understand the spoken language, practice listening, in order to communicate with native speakers. This is how he would be able to understand real linguistic situations. We thus better understand the importance of oral comprehension through which we can “achieve communication objectives” (Krashen and Terrell 1984 cited by Ellis 1990: 59)<sup>1</sup>

Listening comprehension is an important receptive skill that allows us useful preparation for listening in real life. For example, children learn listening before speaking and reading. The outcome of learning a language also depends on the listening skills of the learner. If we take a look at the educational process, a large part of it is based on listening skills and it is frequently used in the classroom. According to Taylor (1964), Wolvin and Coakley (1979) adult learners spend 42 to 57.5% of their time listening to what the teacher says. Thus, they listen to the lectures, explanations and instructions given by the teacher. This way, a large portion of communication time is dedicated to listening. It is therefore necessary to possess effective listening skills in order to be a competent listener both in the classroom and in daily life.

<sup>1</sup>Vandergrift, L. (2007), Recent developments in second and foreign language listening comprehension

In language learning and teaching, listening plays a vital role in vocabulary development, language skills and language use (Barker, 1971) <sup>2</sup>. It also improves comprehension skills to be able to understand the linguistic process. This involves creating a new meaning and form of the word. Subsequently, they will need to be repeated in order to help learners pay greater attention to the syntax and lexicon of the language through listening.

Listening comprehension in language learning has attracted greater interest in recent years. Although listening has a significant place in the audio-oral method, which appeared in the United States in 1950 to train soldiers in modern foreign languages by training "in a language laboratory, ten hours a day, six days a week, week" <sup>3</sup>, it has been ignored in second language learning, research and teaching for a long time. From the 70s and 80s, the arrival of authentic documents, the communicative approach, and the works of "Krashen 1982, James Asher 1988, Gillian Brown 1990" cited by Nunan (2001a), Ellis (1990) and Vandergrift, (2002) <sup>4</sup> helped open new doors to the role and importance of listening in the classroom by emphasizing oral language skills in second language acquisition and learning.

In conclusion, listening comprehension is an essential skill for students learning French. To improve this skill, it is important to use listening strategies such as predicting, repeating, and taking notes. It is also crucial to get regular exposure to the French language through podcasts, videos, and conversations with native speakers.

In addition, it is necessary to work on developing concentration and patience when listening to better understand the message.

Finally, it is recommended that students use educational resources adapted to their language level and practice regularly to improve their oral comprehension..

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<sup>2</sup>David Nunan , (2001a), The Nature of Listening .

<sup>3</sup>Julié 2004: 17)

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