

Developing listening comprehension in English for graphic engineering and design

Jelisaveta Šafranj, Vesna Bogdanović, Vesna Bulatović
University of Novi Sad, Faculty of Technical Sciences, Fundamental Disciplines in Engineering, Novi Sad, Serbia

Introduction



The ability to observe is crucial for successful collaboration, and developing listening skills can lead to enhanced communication in professional environments, as proficient listening skills are essential for professional communication. Students' ability to understand lectures in English for Specific Purposes (ESP) at the tertiary level includes their individual abilities, prior language knowledge, and linguistic predisposition. The degree of previously acquired language competence, which is related to knowledge of written language, also influences the ability to understand lectures delivered in ESP. One can successfully extend and apply this ability when listening to lectures, where spoken language takes the place of written language. However, it also includes new approaches specifically designed for successful understanding of spoken discourse, such as following professional lectures and presentations as well as taking notes while listening to them.

English lectures



It is possible to successfully implement the practice of understanding professional lectures in English for Graphic Engineering and Design at the university level, provided that the teacher collaborates with an expert in the field the students are studying who actively uses the English language and with students who are motivated to improve their language skills. Such an expert's engagement is based solely on his enthusiasm, which is valuable for the design of this language teaching segment. Also, students should be continually encouraged to frequently listen to audio-visual recordings of professional presentations from the Internet, both during the process of acquiring the competence to understand spoken material and after completing this type of training. Also, in order to prevent monotony, learners should participate in a variety of challenging activities (Chang et al., 2019), including professional collaboration through the internet and social media.

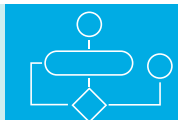
Preparing for listening



The teacher's role in the preparatory phase involves collaborating with the students to conceptualise the upcoming lecture, thereby guiding them to employ strategies that are pertinent to this phase (Dalman & Plonsky, 2022). We can divide the approaches used in the stage of preparation for listening to lectures into two groups: 1. those that predict presentation concept and subject matter, and 2. those that anticipate the main words or concepts in the lecture. These approaches encourage students to actively contemplate the lecture's topic, thereby focusing their attention during the lecture. The most common spoken discourse in English for Graphic Engineering and Design, like most engineering sciences, falls into the following categories (Chang, 2022):

- 1) Presentation of procedure and its sequences;
- 2) Comparing or contrasting procedures, phases, stages, or results;
- 3) Defining cause and effect stages or phenomena;
- 4) Listing results, effects, procedures, elements, etc.

Listening to lectures



Understanding a conference lecture requires focusing on the introduction. The introductory portion of the spoken material serves as a guide for further listening. The introductory parts of academic and professional lectures, regardless of the diversity of the scientific discipline they deal with, are characterised by a uniform structure, which means that their constitutive parts are almost identical. A successful introduction should include the following steps:

1. Emphasising the importance of the topic and stating prior knowledge on the topic,
2. Overview of previous research work,
3. Establishing the starting point which involves highlighting the gap in knowledge and shedding light on the problem.
4. Highlighting the goal of the work or research and presenting its structure

The introduction, which gains the attention of the listener, has two clearly defined functions. Firstly, it presents the lecture's framework by providing essential details about the topic, form, structure, and objective. Secondly, it creates a context for the lecture's content by linking the discussed topic to the listener's prior knowledge while also highlighting its importance and significance within a specific scientific field of expertise.

Also, in order to be successful and understand the speaker, each student should make his own concise interpretation of the main spoken message during the lecture. Given that this is a cognitively demanding process, it is crucial to gradually guide the student through the process of listening to lectures, emphasizing the key aspects of this process. Video lectures from the internet are suitable for practicing the skill of understanding presentations, and students could do them individually depending on their own interest or specialized field of expertise. In order to enable students to understand lectures in English, the teacher should encourage students to use the following approaches during listening (Zeng & Goh, 2018):

1. Separating relevant material from irrelevant material
2. Drawing conclusions about the meaning of unknown words based on the context
3. Elaborating and connecting previous knowledge with new information.

Keeping notes



Students should be constantly encouraged to take notes during conference lectures, just as they would in their professional or academic disciplines. According to Pan et al. (2018), students utilise this approach more effectively when they receive training and experience, and they should leverage the positive transfer from their mother tongue to effectively memorise the oral material presented in a foreign language.

Conclusion



This paper aimed to highlight the importance of enhancing listening comprehension in the English teaching for Graphic Engineering and Design at the university level, given the increasing need for students to comprehend professional lectures in English these days. The current need for students to actively follow English-language lectures in graphic engineering and design highlights the need to enhance their knowledge in this area. It is a very complex and demanding language skill that necessitates a high level of both linguistic and professional competence. Despite the complexity of acquiring competence in understanding English lectures, students can still master it with individual commitment and persistence.

REFERENCES

- Bozorgian, H. & Shamsi, E. (2022) Autonomous use of podcasts with meta-cognitive intervention: Foreign language listening development. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 32(3), 442–458. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ijal.12439>
- Chang, C.S., Millett, S., & Renandya, A. W. (2019) Developing listening fluency through supported extensive listening practice. *RELJ Journal*, 50(3), 422–438. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0033688217751468>
- Chang, C.S. (2018) Extensive listening. *The TESOL Encyclopedia of English Language Teaching*. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118784235.eelt0564>
- Chang, C.S. (2022) The Effect of Listening Instruction on the Development of L2 Learners' Listening Competence: a Meta-Analysis. *International Journal of Listening*, 38(2), 131.149. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10904018.2022.2074851>
- Dalman, M. & Plonsky, L. (2022) The effectiveness of second-language listening strategy instruction: A meta-analysis. *Language Teaching Research*, 1–30. <https://doi.org/10.1177/13621688211072981>
- Pan, Y. C., Tsai, T. H., Huang, Y. K. & Liu, D. (2018) Effects of expanded vocabulary support on L2 listening comprehension. *Language Teaching Research*, 22(2), 189–207. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1362168816668895>
- Zeng, Y. & Goh, C. (2018) A self-regulated learning approach to extensive listening and its impact on listening achievement and meta-cognitive awareness. *Studies in Second Language Learning and Teaching*, 8(2), 193–218. <https://doi.org/10.14746/sslt.2018.8.2.2>

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The article is written within the project "Improving the teaching process in the English language in fundamental disciplines" developed at the Department for Fundamental Disciplines in Engineering, Faculty of Technical Sciences, University of Novi Sad, Serbia