Listening Education

Listening Education

Editor

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Listening Education aims to enhance the practice of listening education by providing a wide range of research and practical information through the publication of papers concerned with the description of methods for teaching listening in primary, secondary, and post-secondary education with the analysis of the relevant research. This online journal will recognize that many disciplines – education, communication science, psychology, sociology, anthropology, - have important contributions to make to the achievement of its goals, and the Editors welcome contributions from them. The online-journal invites papers which offer descriptions of classroom practice, empirical research, and reviews of high quality.

The papers are searchable in three categories:

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Volume 10 Issue 1 (2020) Contents

Title: Concentric Circle Listening -A tool to enhance understanding across divides

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Grade level: adults

Keywords: #listening, #conflict #difference #dialogue #negotiation

Goals:

- Support individuals and groups as they speak and listen across areas of difference

- Foster deeper understanding between individuals and across groups

- Manage conversational dynamics that tend to undermine meaningful exchange

- Promote equitable participation

Type/Aspect of Listening in focus: Listening

- Create a supportive listening environment

- Reduce interruption

- Promote reflection and summarization

- Encourage curiosity and inquiry

Description:

This advanced facilitated listening activity is inspired by "time sharing" and the work of Braver Angels (formerly known as Better Angles) https://braverangels.org/welcome/. People may experience intense emotion. The activity invites people with differing views on a given issue to speak and listen together with the goal of understanding one another While this structured listening activity often enables individuals and groups to progress toward an outcome or goal, that is NOT the goal, or intent behind this activity. An improved, more accurate, more nuanced understanding is the activity goal.

Preparation and Procedures:

<u>Preparation, you will need:</u>

- A room or open area without furniture, poles, or other visual obstructions

- Movable chairs, one for each person and the facilitator(s)

- Space for 2 groups of participants to sit in concentric circles without people feeling crowded

- A timer

- Paper and pen/pencil for each participant

- Whiteboard or flipchart and markers for debrief

- Optional – a talking stick or object to pass

- 1 or 2 facilitator(s)

- 4-24 Participants to either observe or be part of two distinct discussion circles

    o Each discussion circle consists of between 4 and 8 individuals

    o With larger groups, those not in a discussion circle actively participate as observers

- A topic, issue or controversial question the participants want to explore/discuss

    o The topic must have at least 2 sides

    o <u>Each side</u> must have at least 2, and no more than 8, participants willing to converse with other **like-minded** people about this topic and be observed by the other participants.

    o Groups need not be of equal size

    o Should the sides be especially unequal (2 people on one side and 8 on the other), or represent significant power imbalances (6 management team on side and 6 rank and file front line team members on the other), facilitators should be explicit and public about the courage to have these conversations. Facilitators should do what they can to support the psychological safety of those holding the minority or lower power viewpoint.

- Sample topics or controversial questions:

    o Pro/anti-gun ownership

    o Should the United States abolish the Electoral College system of voting?

o   On what basis should water rights be determined in our community?

Procedure:

- Explain this activity to the group as follows

    o   This activity takes 2.5 hours with a short break between the first and second hour.

    o   We will have 2 "fishbowl" discussions of **like-minded** individuals on a topic or question, followed by a period of facilitated reflection.

    o   If you are not actively part of one of the discussions circles, you will listen intently and observe

    o   Observers are a necessary and crucial part of reflecting these discussions

    o   Each 15-minute discussion will be followed by 15 minutes of facilitated participant and observer reflection

    o   There will be a short break after both sides have discussed and reflected

    o   A second round of 7-minute conversations and 7-minute reflections follows.

    o   The end of our time together is to debrief the overall experience and learning.

- When working with a 2-sided issue, this activity can be completed in 2.5 hours

- Where possible, 3 hours is suggested for a more relaxed pace and experience

- Complex issues with multiple viewpoints and sides make this a day long activity, or multi-session class.

- Select a topic or controversial question that is important and relevant to this group.

    o   Ideally a topic with 2 positions and into which participants can sort themselves based on their worldviews

    o   When working with intact groups, the topic is often something with which the group struggles

    o   When using in a classroom, ask students for a current topic impacting their lives or,

    o   Suggest a controversial question around which students may have divergent views

- Identify the "sides" of the issue

    o   With some issues the "sides" are clear and pre-labeled (pro-life vs. pro-choice)

- In other cases, ask the group how the issue divides them and label the sides view A and view B

- For complex, multi-faceted issues, acknowledge additional perspectives and agree to repeat this exercise so that all sides have the opportunity to have the group listen to their views

- Sort participants into roles

  - Have everyone come to the center of the room

  - Ask participants to divide themselves based on which side best represents their view on this topic

  - Participants whose worldview differ from these sides become observers

  - Each side must have at least 2 individuals

  - If a side has more than 8 individuals, ask the side to select up to 8 individuals to discuss this topic with other **like-minded people** who share their view on this topic.

  - All other participants from each side also become observers

- Decide which group goes first. You can do this by:

  - Asking if there is a preference

  - Flipping a coin

  - Offering the group with less power or fewer members the choice to go first or second

  - Note, it is not necessarily an advantage to go first, however, often sides are eager to "have their say" and see it as an advantage.

- Ask everyone to bring their chairs into two concentric circles, with both circles facing the center.

  - The outer circle contains the observers

  - The inner circle contains those likeminded individuals having the discussion

- Facilitators open each round of the activity by:

  - Explaining that the people seated in the inner circle will discuss what they see to be the important issues and concerns regarding this topic.

  - Thanking participants in the inner circle for their willingness to engage in this discussion

- o Telling the observers (the outer circle) they have an active and important role during this discussion. They are to observe, take notes, and report out at the end of the discussion.

- o The observers are asked to listen and … (see attached worksheet):

    - ▪ Take notes so that you can summarize the key points and ideas the group expresses regarding this issue (this is their "what")

    - ▪ Notice and note the non-verbal behaviors (facial expressions, gestures, tone of voice, pace and volume of the conversation, body tension and posture etc.)

    - ▪ Notice and note any feelings or emotions expressed or implied

    - ▪ See if you can understand the "why" behind their "what"

        - • What they value, fear, are concerned about or interested in

    - ▪ Are there any differences of opinions expressed? If so, what are they?

- o Set the timer for 15 minutes and join the observer circle.

- o Facilitator(s) should take notes and track time. If possible, do not interject.

Tips and Debriefing:

- • Debrief for each side's point of view discussion.

    - o When the timer rings, allow the person speaking to finish their thought, then end.

    - o Thank he participants in the inner circle for sharing their thinking

    - o Thank the observers in the outer circle for their focused attention

    - o Recognize there is likely more to discuss

    - o Acknowledge that there will be a second round later … and still not enough time for all to be said and heard

    - o Ask those in the inner circle to turn their chairs to face the outer circle, that is to have their backs facing the center of the circle.

- • Questions for the inner circle

    - o What this was like?

    - o What did you notice?

    - o What surprised you?

- Questions for the outer circle?

    o Please summarize and recap what they heard.

- Ask the inner circle

    o Was the recap accurate?

    o Was anything missing?

    o Does anything need to be clarified? – Note this is not a time to add **new** information.

- Ask the outer circle

    o What this was like for them?

    o What did you notice? – use handout to prompt if needed

    o What surprised you?

- When this debrief is over, ask the second group to sit in the center. Turn the chairs to face the center of the circle and start the second discussion.

- When both discussions in round 1 are complete, take a break and begin round two.

- This is the final debrief for the activity

    o How was this similar or different from other "listening to difference" conversations?

    o What did you learn?

    o What will you take away from this experience?

    o What will you do differently?

Assessment: This activity is not intended to assess listening; however, one could ask the group the following questions of the individuals in the "sides" discussions.

To what degree do you feel understood	1	2	3	4	5
	Less understood		No change		More understood

Why, What leads you to rate your experience this way?

To what degree do you feel listened to	1	2	3	4	5
	Less listened to		No change		More listened to

Why, What leads you to rate your experience this way?

To what degree did this activity impact your experience of the other group's perspective?	1 Not at all	2	3 Some change	4	5 A lot of change

How does this discussion experience compare with other similar discussions you have had?	1 less favorable	2	3 Same	4	5 More favorable

What else would you like me/us to know about your experience with this activity?

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Title: Exploring Difficulties Faced in Teaching Elective English Listening Courses at Japanese Universities

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This paper is an exploration of the problems encountered by the author while teaching two elective English listening courses at private Japanese universities in 2017 and 2018. Problems arose regarding classroom temperature and student expectations of passive involvement. Further issues discussed are processing limitations due to working memory and state of phonological acquisition, motivation, general listening pedagogy and assessment along with attempted solutions in order to inform administrators and classroom practitioners who may be planning or teaching foreign language listening courses.

Introduction

This article is based upon my experiences as the instructor for listening classes at two Japanese private universities. One university is located in the Tokyo suburbs and one in Yokohama. The class in Tokyo was studying an 'Authentic Listening' (AL) course in 2018, while the class in Yokohama was studying an 'English through Songs' (EtS) course in 2017. Both courses were elective modules open to undergraduate students from first to fourth year.

While students want to improve listening, there are difficulties involved. Despite a substantial body of literature with pedagogical recommendations, there are few reports of teacher practice detailing teacher and learner affect. In this article I shall review the literature on listening pedagogy then document the problems faced and attempted solutions.

For years listening instruction has appeared controversial (Field 2008; Flowerdew & Miller, 2005; Vandergrift, 1997) yet examples of good practice in the literature are in accord. There is agreement on a mixture of bottom-up decoding skills as well as top-down processing skills to compensate for difficulties in decoding at the phonemic and lexicogrammatical levels.

Regarding top-down skills, Vandergrift (1997) and Goh and Aryadoust (2015) advocate cognitive and metacognitive strategies, for example, applying knowledge of genre and context to listening texts. Field (2008) also advocates a move from the "comprehension approach" (CA) (Field, 2008: ch. 2, p. 2/17) toward a process approach, where learners apply both bottom-up and top-down processes, as opposed to listening for answers to preset comprehension questions.

Working with adult learners of English as a foreign language (EFL), one cannot presume the L1 and L2 phonological systems are the same, nor that learners have acquired the entire English phonological system; therefore part of listening lessons should provide affordances for phonology acquisition, at least for receptive purposes. How phonology is acquired is not completely clear but it appears that naive language learners may have problems with novel phonemes, which may initially be categorized as non-speech sounds, according to Best's (1995) Perceptual Assimilation Model (PAM). L2 phonemes that may be allophones in L1 may move to an L2 category assignation for more experienced listeners, according to Flege's (1995; 2003) Speech Learning Model; for less experienced listeners they are likely to move to the nearest L1 assignation, according to Kuhl's (1992; 1994; Kuhl et al, 2008) Native Language Magnet model.

To develop receptive phonology, Hardison (2018) increased visual salience by gating video, (i.e., clipping video to target phonemes and extending onwards to complete a word and/or utterance gradually) which caused subjects to be more likely to hear target consonants and identify words in her study more effectively, either when listening to video or audio only. This makes sense if we apply what Pienemann (2003) says about morphology to phonology: what is unable to be processed cannot be acquired. This approach may also prove useful at the

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utterance level, especially with connected speech, to assist in correcting the problem observed by Bonk (2000) where "Nearly a quarter of the 59 students tested were not able to make sense of connected L2 speech even when they knew all the words used in the text." (Bonk, 2000, p. 27.) With features of linguistic items becoming more salient, parsing such items may become easier.

Unfortunately, creating gated videos requires time that many teachers do not have, therefore, additional methods are still required. Field (2008) promotes an approach that mixes bottom-up decoding with top-down strategies while Goh (1998) advocates a greater emphasis on bottom-up decoding for less proficient listeners and top-down strategies for more proficient listeners. However, learners may have problems in applying strategies to their listening. Siegel (2014) advocates teacher modelling as a useful way to provide listening instruction, and this can be applied to use of strategies. This should provide learners in L2 classrooms with greater understanding in techniques their teacher is instructing them in, rather than the transformation of instruction where learners do something similar but perhaps not the same as the teacher's intention.

Problems encountered

Course expectations

One problem with both courses was that being electives, some students selected them due a perceived light workload. I know this was the case for at least one EtS student because they told me explicitly. However, this too is also documented; as Siegel (2014) notes, some learners in Japan are accustomed to passive language learning rather than cognitively challenging work. I ascribed the apparent lack of motivation among some students in the class to this. The professor in charge of part-time instructors at that particular university had provided prior warning that some students may be seeking a passive experience because it had been a problem in prior iterations of the course before I had taught it.

The scheduling of the classes was also an issue; the EtS class was after lunch on Wednesday and the AL class was scheduled for 90 minutes on Friday afternoon. The heat of the classrooms in buildings with centrally controlled air conditioning was conducive to students

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feeling tired, particularly in summer, which affected attention.

Motivation

Another problem in both courses pertains to the psychology of learners in a wider area than listening pedagogy. Amotivation is "a state in which one either is not motivated to behave, or one behaves in a way that is not mediated by intentionality." (Ryan & Deci, 2017, p. 190) This amotivation in the listening class may arise from: learners perceiving in themselves a lack of satisfactory proficiency which task completion would require; a belief that participation in the act (in this case attempting to listen) would not result in a desired outcome (parsing the speech stream); a perception of low utility in the task; or a lack of prior exposure to the particular type of instruction.

Due to the classes being chosen as elective courses I believe most students perceived utility in listening tasks. However, self-efficacy may be low due to listening instruction being neglected at the high-school level and therefore inconsistent listening instruction received prior to the elective class. Furthermore, lack of experience with a combination of bottom-up and top-down process instruction may also have created a state for some learners to perceive incorrectly that the instructional method was overly novel and therefore ineffective.

Ways that I chose to mitigate amotivation in the classes were by selecting materials that I was passionate about and negotiating text selection with students, as per Breen & Candlin's (1980) recommendation. I told students which tasks were possible with one week to prepare, chosen by a show of hands in the classroom. Tasks were proposed with consideration of all students in the room who would need to share audio equipment and undertake whole-class instruction,

Signal Processing

In spite of learner expectations, the courses were demanding. This was partly due to the classroom conditions, and partly due to the sustained attention required to process the auditory signal. This appeared more problematic for students with erratic attendance than those with regular attendance, and I ascribe this to less practice both in paying close attention to listening

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texts and using working memory to process longer streams of speech than regular attendees.

Working memory, according to Baddeley (1992) is composed of three components, the Visuo-Spatial Sketchpad, the Phonological Loop and the Executive Function. The Phonological Loop is used to process speech, while the Executive Function processes the need to act based upon stimuli. Information from the Phonological Loop is either retained in working memory, sent to long-term memory or else lost. When the Phonological Loop is in constant use and the Executive Function is processing information and deciding how to act, the system becomes stressed and thus information is lost without being retained in either working memory or long-term memory.

Such loss of information means listeners lose out on the meaning from the auditory signal. This problem was mitigated by pausing recordings and/or by providing several opportunities to listen to the same part of the recording. I also used what Field (2008) refers to as "micro-listening activities … they ideally feature single sentences, pairs of sentences or very short sections of text, drawn from published, off-air or internet recordings". (Field, 2008, ch. 5, p. 24/33)

Another strain on cognitive abilities is the complexity of the language. As Robinson (2003) states, length of time on task causes diminishing attention which in turn causes "failure to correctly identify and interpret auditory input (in studies of comprehension)" (p. 652). Certainly, it is more difficult to maintain attention to an auditory signal while processing phonemic values and also processing lexicogrammatical features such as time markers from features with low salience such as verb endings, and reference from pronouns which could repeat depending on the different subjects and objects of the speech act.

There is also the complexity of the auditory signal itself to deal with, such as background noise and phonemic quality in relation to norms that learners have internalized in L1 acquisition (Flege, 1990; Kuhl, 1992). When phonemes are acquired, they are either learned 'as is' if they are extremely unique in comparison to the learner's first language (Flege, 1990); if they are

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similar they are mapped as equivalents to the closest similar first language phonemes (Best, 1995; Kuhl, 1992) though Flege asserts that L1 and L2 differences can be acquired over time.

Students in the courses had differing levels of exposure to spoken English, and differing levels of exposure to varieties of English. In practical terms, the students with least exposure to English have less developed L2 phonology and therefore have problems perceiving and processing the auditory signal accurately. For such students, the metacognitive strategy of refocusing attention using selective attention (Vandergrift & Tafaghodtari, 2010) was taught, with learners reminded to write notes during silences while the recording was paused. This had mixed success: it avoided complete dysfunction in listening, with all students eventually returning focus to the auditory stream rather than allowing negative affect to distract them from decoding the text.

Assessment

Summative assessment of student listening was problematic for the AL class due to differences between my beliefs and student expectation regarding listening pedagogy. Tests of listening should assess only listening; however multiple-choice items implicitly test a synthesis of reading and listening skills, and transcription tests writing skills, and may be unreliable due to lack of knowledge of phoneme-grapheme correspondences. However, all students were English majors therefore I decided it was unproblematic. A combination of multiple-choice items and transcription was also used for formative assessment in the EtS class as well as summative assessment by presentation, discussed in more detail below.

Additionally, because phonology is acquired at different speeds depending on the learners, it is unfair to ascribe university credits to only one aspect of listening. Because the EtS class had been assessed summatively by the previous teacher through presentations about songs chosen by the learners, I felt this would provide a clear reason for independent listening outside the classroom.

With the AL class, I presumed that phoneme-grapheme correspondences were largely no

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problem and that due to the university program's mandatory extensive reading thread, that most students were fluent readers. Therefore a benchmark, mid-term and summative test were used. This allowed me to assess the level of learners' phonological acquisition, providing the information about the highest accuracy that the learners could attain, with the caveat that tests are snapshots of ability on one day. While learners gained listening skills, the tests used reflected the difficulty in using those skills without the kind of teacher direction in lessons and therefore scores were lower than expected despite evidence of students decoding natural speech.

Limitations

The above factors are problems faced in the author's elective classes in private universities in Japan. One limitation of the data is that it is highly subjective and therefore may not generalize to language teaching worldwide. However, it is truthful and details of problems faced and possible solutions thereof may be useful for administrators or classroom practitioners planning or conducting foreign language listening courses.

Summary

Clearly there are many factors that affect teaching and learning, both human and aspects of the physical classroom environment. While teacher-related aspects are easier to control than environmental factors, they are by no means simple due to emotion, or sound pedagogical decision-making conflicting with desires of some students to avoid participation in class work or engage in tasks they find either unappealing or perceive unlikely to achieve to a satisfactory standard.

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Title: Teaching Listening Skill Building in Medical Education

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Abstract:

Research suggests that when healthcare providers listen to patients, it can result in more compliance, enhanced patient satisfaction and physicians are less vulnerable to malpractice lawsuits. Listening skills are useful in medical interactions and Stewart (1995) noted that when patients are encouraged by their physician to complete their statement of concerns, they feel more comfortable with the interaction and relationship and reveal important medical information. Integrating communication, particularly listening skills into the existing medical curriculum is important. Many clinicians who completed training more than a decade ago received little or no formal education in communication skill building and currently, there is no precedence required to complete advanced communication training after medical school graduation. Recently, we asked 124 licensed and practicing physicians in the State of Florida to identify communication concerns that might be addressed through future medical education and requested them to make suggestions as to helpful training skills. Based on the needs of the physicians in this study, building listening skills into the medical education curriculum appears necessary for future training opportunities.

Introduction:

Since the time of Hippocrates, professors in medical schools have been telling their students to listen to their patients (Holmes, 2007). Research suggests that when healthcare providers listen to patients, it can result in more compliance, enhanced patient satisfaction and

physicians are less vulnerable to malpractice lawsuits. Listening skills are useful in medical interactions and Stewart (1995) noted that when patients are encouraged by their physician to complete their statement of concerns, they feel more comfortable with the interaction and relationship and reveal important medical information. Arnold and Coran (2011) suggest that medical students and novice doctors come to realize that listening to the patient's medical history and personal account of their own illness is the best source of information to help make an accurate diagnosis. Research suggests that when healthcare providers listen to patients, it can result in better compliance (Wright, Sparks & O'Hair, 2008), enhanced patient satisfaction (Zachariae, Pedersen, Jenson, Ehrnrooth, Rossen, & von der Maase, 2003), circumventing of potential communication barriers (Arnold, Coran, & Korepeckji-Cox, 2016), and less vulnerability to malpractice lawsuits (Davis, Foley, Crigger, & Brannigan, 2008). Yet regardless of this supporting research, listening skill building is an underused and not completely understood skills set. This paper presents listening medical education suggestions based on responses and needs of practicing physicians.

Listening to Patients:

Cocksedge and May (2005) suggest that listening to the patient's story has long been regarded as central to the practice of medicine and therefore is important in the medical encounter. Patient satisfaction has been tied to the effective listening of physicians and other healthcare practitioners (Arnold, Coran, & Hagen, 2012; Brown et al., 2002; Trahan & Rockwell, 1999; Wanzer, Booth-Butterfield, & Gruber, 2004). When patients are encouraged by their healthcare providers to complete their statement of concerns they feel more comfortable with the interaction and relationship and reveal important medical information (Stewart, 1995). Just because an individual hears or views stimuli that does not necessarily mean they are processing meaning from that stimuli and fully listening (Wolvin & Coakley, 1996).

A lack of consultation time does not be a limiting factor to effective listening. (Boudreau, Jagosh, Slee, Macdonald, & Steinert, 2008). Boudreau et al., (2008) also note that healthcare providers paid more attention to their medical chart more than to the patients themselves. If patients perceive that the physician is not listening, they may exaggerate medical symptoms to create a sense of urgency and as a result, patients hope to compel the provider to listen hence causing communication breakdown.

The Need for Listening in Medical Encounters:

Integrating communication, particularly listening skills into the existing medical curriculum is important. Many clinicians who completed training more than a decade ago received little or no formal education in communication skill building and currently, there is no precedence required to complete advanced communication training after medical school graduation (Arnold, Coran, & Korepeckji-Cox, 2016; Coran, Arnold, & Arnold, 2010). Studies of health care interactions make it clear that patients' cues are frequently missed or not acknowledged by healthcare providers despite the theoretical emphasis on teaching listening skills to physicians and medical students (Arnold et al., 2012, 2016; Beckman, & Frankel, 1997; Campion, Foulkes, Neighbour, & Tate, 2002; Levinson, Gorawara-Bhat & Lamb, 2000; Suchman, Markakis, Tuckett, Boulton, Olson, & Williams, 1985). Despite having introductory training as medical students, residents and attendees missed 70% of 160 empathic opportunities during oncology patient interviews (Easter & Beach, 2004).

Listening is often referred to as 'empathy' in medical discussions (Coran et al., 2010). How to incorporate empathy/empathic listening in medical programs and how best to create health care cultures that value empathy in treatment are ongoing discussion among the healthcare community (Jenkins & Fallowfield, 2002; Larson & Yao, 2005). Healthcare providers, particularly physicians, who learn to listen and adapt to the emotional needs of their patients may circumvent potential communication barriers (Coran, et al., 2010).

Sampling and Procedures:

We asked 124 licensed and practicing physicians in the State of Florida to identify

communication concerns that might be addressed through future medical education and requested them to make suggestions as to helpful training skills. Using a random number generator, a sample of 1,500 practicing and licensed Physicians were chosen. Physicians with no address were removed from the sample. Also deleted from the general sample was physicians in specialties that were likely to have little contact with patients (e.g., pathology, radiology). One specific question was posed: "Current research is focused on identifying communication concerns that might be addressed through future educational and training programs. Do you have any suggestions or concerns?" Physicians were encouraged to respond at length to the questions.

The physician sample included 89 males (72%) and 35 females or (28%) who completed the survey. The respondents were skewed toward males and toward older ages: 29 participants were 65 or older (23%), 36 were 55-64 years (29%), 46 were 45-54 years (37%) and 13 were 44 years or younger (10%). The sample was comprised of a racially diverse and inclusive group of participants: 81 physicians were White (65%), 18 were Hispanic (14%), 13 participants were Asian (10%), and 12 (9.4%) constituted Black or Other race. The physicians participating in this sample were experienced medical providers with 84 citing 21 years or more of medical practice (68%), while 31 reported 11-20 or more years practicing medicine (25%).

The qualitative approach to analysis of their answers is based on Strauss and Corbin's (1990) open coding method. This coding process consists of collecting all the responses to the questions to get an overview of the data; coding the data into meaningful categories; reducing the meaningful categories and then subjecting them to systematic comparison and reconceptualization; and evaluating the categories for overarching themes. One of the overarching themes produced from the physician participants was the recurring physician response of the importance of Listening, Empathy, and Time.

Summary of Findings: Responses from physicians included concerns about communication/listening to patients and a need for physicians to have more training:

- "Physicians need to have more training in communication skills. They don't listen to their patients" "Focus on sensitivity as well-empathy"

- "Allow the patient enough time to describe the symptoms"

- "I had a neurology instructor tell us the medical students "if you listen to the patient, they will tell you what is wrong with them"

- "Formal course in the practice of compassion and empathy"

- "Good communication is crucial between patients/parents and medical doctors, to avoid medical errors and to build trust"

- "With good communication one can have better patient satisfaction. Teaching should focus on SPECIFIC SKILLS to increase patient satisfaction."

- "Informal training in verbal and nonverbal communication and listening in medical encounters."

- "I am terribly concerned that with all the push for TMR and CPOE, that hands on/empathetic care is going to be a thing of the past for patients"

- "Formal education through didactic sessions observing experienced physicians' communicating with patients"

- "Medical students and residents would greatly benefit from formal communication training"

- "Spend time 'needed' with patients; do not evaluate, examine, diagnose, treat based on time allowed per patient"

- "How to not overwhelm patients with data. Too much info they don't know what is important anymore"

- "Involve the patient more in their care. A partnership with their physician. Assist patient with their health information."

The Need for Listening Training in Medical Education:

These results suggest that while physicians recognize the needs and benefits to effective communication with patients, they simultaneously reveal a lack of emphasis on training and

effectiveness compared with other areas of medical training practice. These findings echo findings of earlier research studies when it comes to the role of communication in medical training. The communication skills approach for healthcare providers has gained momentum but changing professionals' communication behavior permanently is a difficult challenge (Lundeby et al., 2017). Medical students' direct expressions of empathy decrease as they progress through medical school (Hojat, Mangione, Nasca, Rattner, Erdmann, Gonnella, & Magee, 2004). Further, as training progresses, medical students and residents talk more, listen less, in their interactions with patients, suggesting that the socialization of physicians implies learning and using dominating communication strategies (Lundeby, Jacobsen, & Lundeby, 2017; Roter, Stewart, Lipkin, Stiles, & Inui, 1997). Osborn (2000) cites that reasons why physicians may not demonstrate advanced communication skills include decreasing consultation time, variability in treatment regimens, the escalating amount of medical information, and diversity of populations. Also, some doctors may not be aware of how their own emotions impact their communication with patients.

Misconceptions about what listening skills training can benefit physicians might be an important barrier to training effectiveness (Lundeby et al., 2017). Misunderstandings reported by physicians involved patients acknowledging comprehension of a medical conversation when in fact they did not fully comprehend and patients not asking follow-up questions. For this and other reasons, integrating listening training into the existing medical curriculum is important.

The need for empathy and the need for more empathy/sensitivity training was one of the requests cited by physicians. Guiliana and Baum (2011) note that empathy and its associated skills have been correlated with patient satisfaction and adherence to the treatment plan. The absence of empathy may increase patient dissatisfaction and the risk of medical malpractice claims (Davis, Foley, Crigger, & Brannigan, 2008). When healthcare professionals communicate with patients, a common observation is that they interrupt, dominate the conversation and limit patients' opportunity to express concerns or other emotional or challenging topics (Hojat et al., 2004). Given that verbal and nonverbal communication is inherently part of listening research,

and that our sample of physicians cited listening skills as important, it seems logical that listening skill building be a required component of medical communication training.

Empathic listening consists of eliciting feelings, paraphrasing and reflecting, using silence, listening to what the patient is saying but also to what he is unable to say, encouragement and non-verbal behavior (Arnold et al., 2016; Wright, et al., 2008). Therapeutic listening training could include reading nonverbal and verbal cues, attending to micro-expressions, reflecting patients' emotions, and demonstrating supportive attending behaviors. Teaching clinicians effective listening skills as an alternative to interruption and dominance is therefore of great importance. Researchers are interested in how empathy can be taught in medical programs and how best to create healthcare cultures that value empathy in treatment (Lundeby et al., 2017). Listening has been reported by patients as the number one expectation of physicians and a lack of consultation time need not limit effective listening (Arnold, Coran, & Koropeckyj-Cox, 2016). As such, patient satisfaction has long been tied to the effective listening of physicians and other healthcare practitioners.

Teaching Physicians Listening Skill Building in Medical Education:

Based on the needs of the physicians in this study, building listening skills into the medical education curriculum appears necessary for future training opportunities. Based on the findings from the Physicians in this study, listening skill building for medical education should include, but not be limited to, the following educational procedure:

1. Identification with and understanding of patients' situations, feelings, and motives.

2. Teach sounding board skills, paraphrasing, clarifying and listening to patient narrative.

3. Role-playing supportive versus inappropriate medical communication encounters.

4. Decoding aural and visual stimuli during the medical interview.

5. Skill strategies include long term memory techniques (i.e. interrupted rehearsal recall).

6. Note taking techniques (i.e. mapping, precis, Cornell method, and outlining) for the medical interview.

7. Video example of deceptive narcotic-seeking communication.

8. Auditory memory sequencing exercise to enhance short term recall.

Arguably, introducing skill-based listening alongside clinical skills will benefit not only the physicians and other healthcare providers, but also enhance patient satisfaction with the medical visit. People "assume" they automatically can listen if they simply can hear, or unknowingly acknowledge listening and hearing as identical behaviors. This is not so; hearing is a physiological act of sound or stimuli hitting an individual's eardrum, while listening involves recognizing and receiving the stimuli, attending to the stimuli (in this case, the patient's message), and trying to make sense of stimuli (comprehend, interpret, and assign meaning to the information that a patient shares) (Wolvin & Coakley, 1996). We understand that medical curriculums are filled with time constraints and are hard pressed to teach basic clinical skills, however listening courses can be built to fit specific programs or marketed as fourth year medical electives. Further, contemporary medical institutions are equally challenged by time between physicians and patients; therefore on-the-job skill acquisition and/or practice is underdeveloped as well. Arguably, the earlier you start learning listening skills the more proficient a healthcare provider could become over the course of their career.

Although additional medical courses that emphasize listening as a skill would be ideal, it is important to develop listening workshops for practicing healthcare providers in order to teach them new skills, not learned previously, or to continue their communication education. Advantages of workshop formats are that they are adaptable to different medical specialties, can be taught in different teaching environments, and can be completed in a succinct period of time. Listening was cited as one of physician's more important skills, yet only one healthcare provider reported any formal listening training outside of medical schools (Coran et al., 2010). These indications support the problem stated earlier, and the findings of the present research reinforce the need for greater initial and ongoing listening and communication skills training among physicians which should contribute to the overall benefit of patients and physicians alike.

Conclusion

A doctor performs from 150,000-300,000 interviews during career making the medical interview a commonly performed procedure in clinical medicine (Lipkin, 1996). Active listening is a critical component of the medical interview. The therapeutic provider-patient relationship is dependent on the ability of the healthcare provider to communicate effectively with the patient (Davis et al., 2008). We would like to go down the path of better educating physicians and providers on listening skills in medical curriculums and for practicing healthcare providers. Currently, physicians and medical curriculums abstractly discuss the importance of listening in medical encounters. Integration of listening skills into medical education could arguably enhance satisfaction among provider-patient visits and provide physicians with skills necessary for a successful consultation and patient relationship.

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Title: A Study on Teaching Active Listening in an integrated EFL Classroom

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In the modern era where collaboration is the norm, listening has been foregrounded as a core competency to achieve personal and professional success. This study reports the author's efforts of teaching active listening in an integrated English course for college freshmen in Taiwan. The pedagogical unit consists of five components: *Introduction to active listening*, *Active listening in customer service*, *Active listening and listening styles*, *Active listening and job interviews*, and *Reflection*. Students were found to perceive the pedagogical unit quite positively. They were also able to recognize contexts to apply active listening in appropriate and effective manners. At the end of the course, many students envisioned how they would continue to apply active listening in their future personal and professional lives. This paper ends with a few teaching suggestions and a call for more efforts to incorporate active listening into school curriculum.

Listening is a critical component for effective communication. Without effective listening, communication may become a soliloquy and lead to misunderstanding and frustration. Current research from multiple disciplines has reassured the necessity of teaching listening skills to students across ages and learning contexts (Herrmann, 2014). No longer deemed as a "Cinderella skill" (Jalongo, 2010, p. 11) compared to speaking, reading, and writing, a renewed emphasis on teaching listening skills has emerged. Such an emphasis serves as a timely response

to teachers' frustration that their students cannot listen properly in class (Hermann, 2014). It also responds to a growing consensus that listening is an important soft skill for interpersonal relationships (Itzchakov et al., 2014; Weger Jr. et al., 2010, 2014) and success in the workplace (Ala-Kortesmaa & Isotalus, 2015; Dailey, 2014; Maben & Gearhart, 2018; McNaughton et al., 2008). In the 21st century where collaboration is the norm rather the exception (Hermann, 2015), listening is now seen as a core competency for professional well-being and success (Ala-Kortesmaa & Isotalus, 2015; Bodie, 2011).

To listen is much more complicated than to perceive by the ear. Different terms across disciplines have been proposed to describe what it means to be able to listen effectively—*competent listening* (Fontana et al., 2015; Maben & Gearhart, 2018), *supportive listening* (Bodie & Jones, 2012; Bodie et al., 2013), d*ialogic listening* (Ala-Kortesmaa & Isotalus, 2015), *empathic* or *therapeutic listening* (Floyd, 2014; Wolvin & Coakley, 1996), *active listening* (Spataro & Bloch, 2017), and *active-empathic listening* (Bodie, 2010). The current study will utilize the mostly commonly used interdisciplinary term "active listening" to try to capture the complex and multidimensional nature of listening.

Active listening involves knowledge about listening, appropriate responses, and a willingness to listen (Fontana et al., 2015). This concept was first developed by Gordon (1975) to describe an array of verbal and nonverbal skills in parent-child communication. The goal of active listening is "to develop a clear understanding of the speaker's concern and also to clearly communicate the listener's interest in the speaker's message" (McNaughton et al., 2008, p. 224). It involves striving for mutual understanding and empathy and not passing judgment on the speaker (Spataro & Bloch, 2018). Specific behavioral components of active listening include paraphrasing, making empathetic comments, showing effort as a conversation partner, asking appropriate questions, and communicating attentiveness through eye contact and other body language (McNaughton et al., 2008; Spataro & Bloch, 2018). As Spataro and Bloch (2018) summarize, active listening "surpasses passive listening or simple hearing to establish a deeper connection

between speaker and listener, as the listener gives the speaker full attention via inquiry, reflection, respect, and empathy" (p. 168).

Following Spataro and Bloch (2018), the current study introduced students to the concept and essential components of active listening, guided them to recognize contexts where active listening could be applied, and helped them to transfer active listening skills to their personal lives and workplace. The research questions are: (1) How did students perceive the active-listening teaching unit? (2) How did students apply active listening to their immediate contexts?

Previous research on active listening

In the field of second language (L2) education, research on listening in general has expanded quite considerably in the past two decades. Previous research has focused on various topics, including metacognitive strategies (Vandergrift & Goh, 2012), note-taking (Siegel, 2016), integration with other skills (Tragant & Vallbona, 2018), technology-assisted listening (Grgurović & Hegelheimer, 2007; Hsieh, 2019), to name just a few. Probably because of the fact that language learners are still occupied with mastering the target language, L2 listening studies have not addressed the more affective side of listening which promotes "inquiry, reflection, respect, and empathy" (Spataro & Bloch, 2018, p. 168) on the part of the listener.

In other fields where effective communication plays an essential role in one's professional image, active listening has received much attention. For example, the integration of specific active listening strategies (e.g., communicating respect and asking permission to take notes) was found to contribute to preservice teachers' learning of parent-teacher communication skills (McNaughton et al., 2008). The specific behavioral components of active listening have also been examined to see how they can affect communication. Weger and his associates (2010) found that in peer interviews, paraphrasing a speaker's words increases the listener's likability or social attractiveness, although such paraphrasing attempts did not seem to increase the participants'

conversational satisfaction or the speaker's feeling of being understood by the listener. In the contemporary world where communication has been extended to the digital form, companies are urged to train their staff to actively listen to customers' needs on social media to build positive public images (Maben & Gearhart, 2018). Pertinent responses which indicate attentiveness to the original message should replace "standard, boiler-plate responses" (Maben & Gearhart, 2018, p. 105). Maben and Gearhart (2018) illustrate this point with an embarrassing example from Old Navy's Facebook account where a woman commented on how a model looked like a friend. Old Navy responded, "We're happy to help. Can you message us the name or item number of this item your (sic) looking for?" This response was ridiculed by many Facebook fans who immediately detected the mismatch.

An important strand in the research of active listening has been the development of different scales to measure it or a relevant construct such as listening styles. In fact, as many as 53 relevant scales were reviewed by Fontana and his associates (2015) in their meta-analysis, and it was found that the most frequently mentioned listening traits were providing feedback, asking questions, and communicating nonverbally. The most relevant scales to the current study are Bodie's (2011) Active-Empathic Listening Scale (AELS), Pearce and his associates' Listening Self-Inventory (LSI; Pearce et al., 1995; 2003), and Watson et al.'s (1995) Listening Styles Profile (LSP; see also Dailey, 2014; Zaman & Sidhu, 2013). For the current study, Pearce et al.'s (1995; 2003) LSI was used to orient students to the idea of active listening (see Appendix A, as adopted from Spataro & Bloch, 2018). Furthermore, Watson et al.'s (1995) LSP was incorporated as part of the teaching unit (see later) to show how listening styles may affect communication preferences (see Appendix B, as adopted from Dailey, 2014). In the following section, these two scales (LSI & LSP) will be explained.

Listening Self-Inventory (LSI) and Listening Styles Profile (LSP)

LSI rates listeners as "active," "involved," "passive," or "detached" based on their self-assessment to 10 1-5 Likert-style questions about active listening behaviors. Example questions are "I want to listen to what others have to say when they are talking" and "By listening, I can guess a speaker's intent or purpose without being told." With the exception of Questions 2 and 8 which are rated reversely, all questions are scored on a scale of 5 (*almost always*) to 1 (*almost never*). The scores for the ten questions are added up to reveal a final score. A total score between 45-50 indicates that the person is an active listener, 38-44 as an involved listener, 28-37 as a passive listener, and 0-27 as a detached listener (Appendix A). In this study, the LSI was administered in the beginning of the semester to gauge students' perceptions of their own listening styles and to orient them to the idea of active listening.

Another scale utilized in the current study was Watson et al.'s (1995) LSP. Part of the teaching unit designed for this study was inspired by Dailey's (2014) pedagogical task of planning a trip and a diet plus exercise routine according to different listening styles. In Watson et al.'s (1995) scale, there are four listening styles—people, action, content, and time-oriented (P, A, C, and T). People-oriented listeners pay much attention to others' feelings and are interested in learning about personal information while action-oriented listeners are task-oriented and prefer precise and concise information. Content-oriented listeners enjoy receiving complex and challenging information, and time-oriented listeners prefer brief messages. According to Dailey (2014), recognizing our dominant listening style enables us to better understand our needs and expectations as listeners. In this study, the LSP will first serve as a self-assessment tool then as a mechanism to divide students into task groups to plan a trip or a diet/exercise routine according to the customers' listening styles.

In the following section, details related to the participants and research context, the teaching unit, and data collection and analysis methods will be explained.

The current study

The participants and research context

The current study took place in a compulsory English-as-a-foreign-language (EFL) integrated-skills course for freshmen in a university in northern Taiwan. It is a year-long course, and this study was conducted in the second semester of the school year. Each academic semester lasted for 18 weeks. The course objectives were to help students develop their general English proficiency and apply their knowledge and skills in English to real-world contexts. This intact class consisted of 31 students (9 males and 22 females), with an average age of 18. They were English majors who just passed a competitive national entrance exam to be admitted to their university. They had a rather homogenous linguistic background as native speakers of Mandarin Chinese and had learned English as a foreign language since elementary school. An informed consent was signed by every student before the study began.

The teaching unit

To recapitulate, an active listener expresses interest in the speaker's message and demonstrates an understanding of the message without judgment (Weger et al., 2010). The listener may paraphrase the speaker's message or asks questions to encourage the speaker to elaborate on the contents (Weger et al., 2014). According to Spataro and Bloch (2018), a teaching unit of active listening should strive for two goals: (1) "to initiate the skill acquisition process for students" and (2) "to provide students with the resources and confidence to continue skill development on their own" (p. 173). Upon the completion of this learning unit, students should be able to (Spataro & Bloch, 2018, p. 173):

1. Describe specific behaviors that comprise active listening.

2. Recognize contexts where active listening is applicable and use it in situationally appropriate ways.

3. Identify ways of, and feel confident about, using and continuing to develop active

listening skills in the future.

An important learning outcome of teaching active listening is that students should be able to transfer what they learn about active listening to their work and personal lives. In other words, it is hoped that they apply their newly acquired knowledge and skills about active listening to their immediate contexts and reflect on the effectiveness of such endeavors. The teaching unit is composed of *initial self-assessment and reflection, instruction and activities*, and *re-assessment and reflection*.

I. *Initial self-assessment and reflection*

In the first week of the 18-week semester, students completed Listening Styles Inventory (LSI; Appendix A), calculated their total scores, and read corresponding interpretations of their scores. The whole class the discussed the implications of the scores and what it means to listen actively.

II. *Instruction and activities*

The teaching materials and activities can be divided into five stages: *Introduction to active listening* (4 weeks), *Active listening in customer service* (3 weeks), *Active listening and listening styles* (4 weeks), *Active listening and job interviews* (4 weeks), and *Reflection* (1 week):

1. *Introduction to active listening* (4 weeks): This stage started off by showing an episode of the American situation comedy *Everybody Loves Raymond* (Season 2, Episode 2). In this episode, Raymond learns about active listening in parenting classes and then successfully applies the skills to resolve familial conflicts. Three clips extracted from this episode were later shown to students to reinforce the idea of active listening (see Appendix C for a list of resources used for this part of the teaching unit). The concept of active listening was then formally introduced to students and illustrated by more video clips and examples (see Appendix C). Specific behavioral components such as asking for clarification and paraphrasing were

discussed and practiced in class. Before this phase ended, students were debriefed on the requirement of the individual final report (Appendix D) and provided with examples from Spataro and Bloch's (2018) study.

2. *Active listening in customer service* (3 weeks): In today's workplace where collaboration is highly valued, it is incumbent on educators to extend their teaching of active listening to professional settings. As mentioned earlier, Maben and Gearhart (2018) urge organizations to properly train their staff to actively listen to their customers on social media and appropriately respond to their comments to avoid embarrassment and damage to public image. To respond to Maben and Gearhart's (2018) call, real examples taken from well-known retailors such as ASOS were used to illustrate the importance of actively listening to customers' online comments. Then students were also given an opportunity to practice responding to a customer complaint by writing a formal email.

3. *Active listening and listening styles* (4 weeks): Students first individually completed Listening Styles Profile (LSP; Appendix B), and the results were explained by using the second half of Appendix B. Then the class was spilt into two halves—one half responsible for planning a trip, and the other for planning a diet and exercise routine for losing weight. The eighteen students in each half were further divided into four groups of P, A, C, and T. According to their topic (trip or diet/exercise package) and their customers' listening preferences (P, A, C, or T), each group needed to organize an 8-minute presentation to explain the details about the trip or weight-control package. Examples taken from Dailey's (2014) study were used to illustrate how the details should be organized to cater to each listening type (see the last part of Appendix B).

4. *Active listening and job interviews* (4 weeks): Job interviews are an inevitable part of everyone's life. Even before they leave school, students may attend job interviews to get part-time positions. Active listening is an important part of a successful job interview, and this part of the course reinforces the knowledge and skills which students had learned in the course and applied them to job interviews. In small groups of three to five people, students

also needed to produce a 5-minute instructional video on the dos and don'ts of job interviews based on the course materials. These videos were then premiered in class.

5. *Reflection* (1 week): Before the semester ended, students' individual reports on how they applied active listening were collected. Each student also completed a questionnaire (Appendix E) to share their feelings about engaging in learning about active learning. The first question was designed to see how students defined active listening in their own words. The second question required students to provide a short summary for the course content and discuss any specific component which helped them in daily communication. Last but not the least, the third question was designed in a table format to ask students to tick whether they agreed with each of the four statements (Appendix E).

Data collection and analysis

Quantitative data were collected from students' three-way (yes, no, maybe) responses to the third question of the end-of-the-semester questionnaire (Appendix E). Students' responses to the remaining part of the questionnaire and their final reports (Appendix D) and their personal reports were read carefully to understand how they perceived the course and how they engaged in active listening in their personal lives.

Results

(1) Students' perceptions of the teaching unit

The results indicate that the active-listening teaching unit was perceived quite positively by students. Table 1 summarize students' responses to the four close-ended questions in the end-of-the-semester questionnaire (Appendix E).

Table 1: Numbers of students' responses

	YES	NO	MAYBE
1. Enables me to describe specific behaviors that comprise active listening.	18 (58%)	0 (0%)	13 (42%)
2. Allows me to identify contexts where active listening is applicable.	24 (77%)	0 (0%)	7 (23%)
3. Encourages me to apply active listening skills whenever I listen to others.	25 (81%)	1 (3%)	5 (16%)
4. Feels confident about continuing to use and develop active listening skills in the future.	19 (61%)	0 (0%)	12 (39%)

As can be seen from Table 1, 81% of students felt that the pedagogical unit encouraged them to apply active listening skills when listening to others, and 77% of them felt they could identify contexts where they could apply active listening.

A close examination of students' responses to the open-ended questions reveals students' general approval of the teaching unit. In students' own words (all the quotes were students' own words without any modification):

Elsa: I really learned a very meaningful course this semester. I learned the skills to completely receive what others said. Let me communicate with others efficiently! (followed by a thumbs-up emoji; questionnaire)

Meg: I've learned plenty of useful skills I can apply in my daily life. Thanks to Ms. Wang for introducing this skill to us, which triggers me to find more detailed information about active listening (questionnaire).

Tommy: I learned how to communicate with people who are agitated, really understand what they are trying to express (questionnaire).

Students also commented on the different course components, suggesting their active engagement with the pedagogical unit:

Mandy: We learned what is active listening and how to reply the email when the customers have questions of our product. We also learn how to promote the product to different people (questionnaire).

Lynn: In the beginning of the course, we saw some video clips to help us fully understand what active listening is. In those clips, I've learned how to apply active listening to our daily lives. I try to use it when I'm conversing with others, which is really helpful for me to communicate more effectively (questionnaire).

Angie: We write a report about how we apply active listening in our life…We learn about how to answer questions clearly and do not interrupt the interviewer when having a conversation (questionnaire).

Some students also shared their excitement about applying active listening in the future. As Spataro and Bloch (2018) state, one important teaching objective of a pedagogical unit on active listening is students' confidence and willingness of applying active listening in their future lives. In students' words:

Cindy: Active listening helps me better communicate with others. I will use active listening while talking to others…I will also use it when having an argument with my friends or my parents (questionnaire).

Elaine: I will use active listening in the future. When people say something to you, you have to pay full attention (questionnaire).

(2) Students' applications of active listening to their immediate contexts

To reiterate, the second research question focuses on students' descriptions of applying active listening to their immediate contexts. In their personal reports, 15 students (48%) wrote about disputes between family members, 10 students (32%) reported incidents related to their friends or roommates, and 6 students (19%) described incidents which took place in their part-time jobs.

Applying active listening appeared to have helped some students solve problems which resulted from important life decisions they made recently. In the same academic semester when this pedagogical unit was implemented, the students' university announced a contest whose winning teams could be subsidized with airfares and living expenses if their proposals to volunteer in developing countries in the upcoming summer vacation were approved. Some students in this class formed teams to compete in this highly popular contest on their university campus. Two of them were Tina and Wendy, who along with two other classmates, formed a team to volunteer in Sri Lanka. Their proposal was approved by school, and the two girls faced the challenge of breaking the news to their parents. The general unfamiliarity with Sri Lanka proved to be a hurdle when Tina and Wendy broke the news to their parents. In their reports, they wrote:

Wendy: As soon as I received the e-mail, I was overjoyed and told my mom this good news. At first, my mom was as delighted as me. However, everything changed when she asked me which country I chose. Sri Lanka, I replied. After hearing this answer, she appeared to be reluctant and

seriously asked me to tell her the reason why I chose this country. At that time, I was shocked because of her facial expression. I had no idea why she was so unhappy (report).

Tina: My parents are worried about the safety of the country, especially my mom. In the first place, she thought that Sri Lanka is a dangerous place just because they barely heard of the country before. She assumed that we are supposed to choose a more advanced country (report).

In her report, Wendy went on to describe how her explanation was interrupted by her mother's scolding. The first communication attempt was a failure. A few days later, she thought about the active listening unit she had been learning in class and decided to communicate with her mother again:

Wendy: Few days later, I thought that what I had done can't solve the problem. I thought about active listening, which was taught in class. I made up my mind to discuss this thing again by using active listening…I found that it really worked. We not only communicated effectively, but also had a satisfying conclusion. During this whole conversation, I found out the reason why my mom disagreed me to go there. Out of her affection towards me, what she cares about is my safety. If I hadn't used active listening, I could have never known this (report).

Like Wendy, Tina also had to engage in long conversations to persuade her parents to agree with her summer plan to Sri Lanka. In her report, she delineated how she first applied listening patiently and trying to understand her parents' concerns. Eventually, her parents seemed less concerned about her decision. She reflected on her application of active listening:

Tina: After applying active listening skills, I become more aware of the words I say. Do not judge the person or idea you don't agree with in the first place. Instead, to understand people's needs can make you get more information and you may change your original thoughts since others may think differently as you do. It can help you be a thoughtful person (report).

Like Wendy and Tina, many participants also reported incidents related to their attempts to claim independence as they stepped into adulthood. Betty reported how her mom disagreed with her having a part-time job. She was able to paraphrase her mom's words during one of their conversations and show her mom that she was really listening by nodding and making eye contact. She wrote in her report:

Betty: After I used the paraphrasing technique, the circumstance seemed better. She stopped frowning, sitting back for a minute. She seemed relaxed and said with a tender smile, "Take good care of yourself. Don't push yourself too hard at work. You know that I'm just worried about you. I believe you have good judgement." At the same time, I kept the eye contact and nodding to make her feel that I was listening…After experiencing this incidence, I realize the significance of active listening. And it's not difficult for everyone to practice. If we use it well, we can turn a flaming row into a peaceful conversation (report).

With regard to their future applications of active listening, some students had very specific ideas on how they thought active listening would help them. In her report, Anne first explained how she also had bad communication with her parents. Upon her success with applying active listening to solve her conflicts with her roommate, she decided that she would apply it to her parents; she wrote, "I decide to show *Everybody Loves Raymond* to them, to let them understand what active listening is. One day, I hope I can use it to communicate with my

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parents" (report). On the other hand, other students made more general comments about how they could apply active listening in the future. For example, in Ruby's words:

Ruby: I imagine that if I can make good use of active listening skills in the future, I can listen to others more effectively. We learn how to use it and practice it. We can find that the more you are listening, the more information you'll receive…During the listening process, don't over-emphasize my feelings and listen more to other people's thoughts. This is a big reminder to me (report).

To sum up, students were found to perceive the pedagogical unit of active listening quite positively. In their personal reports of applying active listening in their daily lives, students reported benefiting from such application to solve personal problems. They also envisioned on how they could keep applying active listening in the future.

Discussion & conclusion

This study was inspired by Spataro and Bloch's (2018) study which delineated how active listening was implemented in business education. A pedagogical unit was designed and implemented with a group of university freshmen in Taiwan. The pedagogical unit consisted of five components: *Introduction to active listening*, *Active listening in customer service*, *Active listening and listening styles*, *Active listening and job interviews*, and *Reflection*. Over the course of an academic semester, students had opportunities to experience, conceptualize, and analyze what active listening is. They also applied active listening to their personal lives and reported many stories of personal triumph at the end of the semester.

The 5-stage pedagogical unit was perceived quite positively by students. The fact that listening was foregrounded and emphasized as the core of the course led students to understand the importance of listening in an era where everyone can speak up via multiple channels. In their questionnaires and reports, many students refereed to the episode of *Everybody Loves Raymond* which started off the entire teaching unit. This episode seemed to make a lasting impression on students. In their personal reports, a few students mentioned a few other sit coms they watched on streaming services such as Netflix. One way to extend the current design of the pedagogical unit is to invite students to be co-curators of appropriate course materials (Godwin-Jones, 2018, 2019). Student-curated materials can extend the scope of the materials that the course can incorporate and save teachers some time from searching for relevant materials by themselves. Such curation efforts can also extend to other audiovisual genres (e.g., TED talks and instructional videos on YouTube) and reading resources (e.g., newspaper articles).

In terms of design, the teaching unit was designed to integrate all four language skills while foregrounding the importance of active listening. In the future, short exercises can be designed to focus on the strategies which make up active listening, such as paraphrasing appropriately and showing acknowledgment. If students are learners of English whose first language is shared by the instructor, they can be led to compare how these strategies are realized linguistically and paralinguistically in the native and target languages so students are better aware of the differences. Relevant reading materials can also be retrieved online to enrich students' understanding of the concept. If the reading sources feature online discussion forums, students are encouraged to leave their comments online to interact with the global audience. Final reports (Stage 5) can also take other forms (e.g., videos and posters) to encourage students to apply the concept more freely and creatively.

To conclude, we live in an era with inundated information flows and constant pressure to be heard. Listening becomes an ever more important skill to master in today's world because without listening properly, one cannot respond or speak effectively. As Spataro and Bloch (2018) state, active listening helps to develop "a deeper connection between speaker and listener, as the

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listener gives the speaker full attention via inquiry, reflection, respect, and empathy" (p. 168). According to Floyd (2014), listening empathically is a gesture of affection, which is much needed in today's world. As shown by the results of this study, the seed of more empathic communication between people can be planted by raising awareness to active listening. With a renewed interest in listening (Herrmann, 2014), it is hoped that innovative and sustainable ways of incorporating active listening into the pedagogy will be pursued by more educators.

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Appendix A

Listening Styles Inventory (LSI)

(Adopted from Spataro & Bloch, 2018)

The following items relate to your listening style. Choose the appropriate responses. Please be candid.

1. I want to listen to what others have to say when they are talking.

a. Almost always b. Often c. Sometimes d. Seldom e. Almost never

2. I do not listen at my capacity when others are talking.

a. Almost always b. Often c. Sometimes d. Seldom e. Almost never

3. By listening, I can guess a speaker's intent or purpose without being told.

a. Almost always b. Often c. Sometimes d. Seldom e. Almost never

4. I have a purpose for listening when others are talking.

a. Almost always b. Often c. Sometimes d. Seldom e. Almost never

5. I keep control of my biases and attitudes when listening to others speak so that these factors won't affect my interpretation of the message.

a. Almost always b. Often c. Sometimes d. Seldom e. Almost never

6. I analyze my listening errors so as not to make them again.

a. Almost always b. Often c. Sometimes d. Seldom e. Almost never

7. I listen to the complete message before making judgments about what the speaker has said.

a. Almost always b. Often c. Sometimes d. Seldom e. Almost never

8. I cannot tell when a speaker's biases or attitudes are affecting his or her message.

a. Almost always b. Often c. Sometimes d. Seldom e. Almost never

9. I ask questions when I don't fully understand a speaker's message.

a. Almost always b. Often c. Sometimes d. Seldom e. Almost never

10. I am aware of whether or not a speaker's meaning of words and concepts is the same as mine.

a. Almost always b. Often c. Sometimes d. Seldom e. Almost never

Interpretation (LSI)

Active (45-50). The active listener gives full attention to listening when others are talking and focuses on what is being said. This person expends a lot of energy participating in the speaking–listening exchange, which is usually evidenced by an alert posture or stance and much direct eye contact.

Involved (38-44). The involved listener gives most of his or her attention to the speaker's words and intentions. This person reflects on the message to a degree and participates in the speaking–listening exchange. The involved listener practices some direct eye contact and may have alert posture or stance, although this may be intermittent.

Passive (28-37). The passive listener receives information as though being talked to rather than as being an equal partner in the speaking–listening exchange. While assuming that the responsibility for the success of the communication is the speaker's, this listener is usually attentive, although attention may be faked at times. The passive listener seldom expends any noticeable energy in receiving and interpreting messages.

Detached (0-27). The detached listener withdraws from the speaking–listening exchange and becomes the object of the speaker's message rather than its receiver. The detached listener is usually inattentive, disinterested, and may be restless, bored, or easily distracted. This person's noticeable lack of enthusiasm may be marked by slumped or very relaxed posture and avoidance of direct eye contact.

Listening Styles Profile (LSP)

(Adopted from Dailey, 2014)

In this questionnaire, you are asked to indicate how well each statement applies to you. For each statement, note how frequently you engage in that behavior. At the end of each section, add up your score for that section.

	Always (4)	Frequently (3)	Sometimes (2)	Infrequently (1)	Never (0)
1. I focus my attention on the other person's feelings when listening to them.					
2. When listening to others, I quickly noticed if they are displeased or disappointed.					
3. I become involved when listening to the problems of others.					
4. I nod my head and/or use eye contact to show interest in what others are saying					
Total Score for People-Oriented Listening					
1. I am frustrated when others don't present their ideas in an orderly, efficient way.					
2. When listening to others, I focus on any inconsistencies and/or errors in what's being said.					
3. I jump ahead and/or finish thoughts of speakers.					
4. I am impatient with people who ramble on during conversations.					
Total Score for Action-Oriented Listening					
1. I prefer to listen to technical information.					
2. I prefer to hear facts and evidences so I can personally evaluate them.					
3. I like the challenge of listening to complex information.					
4. I ask questions to probe for additional information.					
Total Score for Content-Oriented Listening					
1. When hurried, I let the other person(s) know that I have a limited amount of time to listen.					

2. I begin a discussion by telling others how long I have to meet.					57
3. I interrupt others when I feel time pressure.					
4. I look at my watch or clocks in the room when I have limited time to listen to others.					
Total Score for Time-Oriented Listening					

Now, find the section where you have the largest total score. This is your dominant listening style.

Description of Listening Styles (Adopted from Dailey, 2014)

People-Oriented Listeners

- Have paramount concern for others' feelings
- Interested in hearing personal information and try to find areas of common interest
- Responsive to the "emotional states" of others

Action-Oriented Listeners

- Prefer information to be well organized, concise, and error-free
- Want to do something with the information they hear; task-oriented
- Particularly impatient and easily frustrated with disorganized presentations

Content-Oriented Listeners

- Responsive to complex and challenging information
- Systematic information processors
- Carefully evaluate facts and details before forming judgments and opinions

Time-Oriented Listeners

- Prefer brief or hurried interactions with others
- Often mention how much time they have to listen or meet
- Likely to interrupt others and openly signal disinterest

Remember, we are all combinations of every listening style, but you will probably see more yourself in one style than the others. Recognizing this dominant listening preference will help you understand your needs and expectations as a listener.

Appendix C

Resources Used in the Teaching Unit

I. Video resources
   (1) From *Everybody Loves Raymond*
   https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aP55nA8fQ9I Raymond attends a parenting class
   https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hs5vkevwjb8 Raymond's parents argue
   https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4VOubVB4CTU Raymond uses active listening with daughter
   (2) Other videos
   https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3_dAkDsBQyk "Please pass the butter" conversation between Amy and Sheldon from the American sitcom *Big Bang Theory*
   https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t2z9mdX1j4A Instructional video from MindTools (title: Improving your listening skills with active listening)
   https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TChRv8m79zs A video from CollegeHumor to illustrate hyperactive listening (title: The guy who listens by interrupting you)

II. Reading resources
   Active listening in general
   https://www.mindtools.com/CommSkll/ActiveListening.htm from MindTools (title: Hear what people are really saying)
   Active listening and job interviews
   https://www.quora.com/How-can-active-listening-help-me-during-an-interview Title: How can active listening help me during an interview?
   https://www.ansacareers.com/active-listening-techniques/ Title: The importance of listening in the job interview
   https://www.themuse.com/advice/how-to-ask-an-interviewer-to-clarify-a-question-without-making-things-awkward Title: How to ask an interviewer to clarify a question without making things awkward
   https://www.jobline.uni-muenchen.de/interview/face-to-face-interviews/language_interview/saying_it
   right /index.html Saying it right and clarifying information

Appendix D
Instruction for Completing the End-of-the-Semester Personal Report
(Modified from Spataro & Bloch, 2018, pp. 176-177)

In Week 17 of this semester, you will submit a written reflection which includes the following parts:

(1) Describe an incident where you applied active listening in your personal life or workplace—one involving face-to-face contact.

(2) Describe the specific active listening strategies you applied by mentioning our course materials. Be sure to include the references so that I know what course materials are utilized.

(3) Explain how such application affected/improved the communication in the situation.

(4) Explain how you will continue to use active listening in the future in your personal life and/or workplace.

You can consult the examples from Spataro & Bloch (2018). If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at any time. Have fun!

Appendix E
End-of-the-Semester Questionnaire

<u>Please answer each question the best you can.</u>
1. Define active listening in your own words.

2. Summarize the course content for this semester (i.e., summarize what we did this semester). Is there anything you learned from this course which helps you better communicate with others? Please explain.

3. Do you think that this course provides you with the following? (<u>Tick one box only</u> for each statement). The course

	YES	NO	MAYBE
1. Enables me to describe specific behaviors that comprise active listening.			
2. Allows me to identify contexts where active listening is applicable.			
3. Encourages me to apply active listening skills whenever I listen to others.			
4. Feels confident about continuing to use and develop active listening skills in the future.			

4. Other thoughts you would like to share (optional)