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Teaching Listening: Task 2

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Task 2

Here is a selection of some possible listening situations (cf. Task 1). For each, write in the number(s) of the most characteristic challenge(s) that the situation presents, then think of one or two features of each listening situation which help the learner to understand what he hears – thus balancing out, at least to some extent, the difficulties.

Listening situation	Difficulties	What helps
1. the listening component of various language exams		
1. lectures and talks connected to their studies		
3. telephone conversations, tele- or video-conferences		
4. listening to or watching news, sports programs or documentaries on TV or in the radio or online		
5. films		
6. announcements at railway stations or airports when travelling abroad		
7. engaging in private conversations with individuals of other nationalities – using English as a common language		
8. listening to songs		
9. Your own:		
10. Your own:		

Key

Listening situation	Difficulties	What helps
1. the listening component of various language exams	can be all, 10-14 especially acute here	- the task to go with the listening text reveals information about the content of the text, as well as some key vocabulary in the written form
2. lectures and talks connected to their studies	1, 2, 3 (4-7 should be minimised by the lecturer!) 10 in the case of audio recordings 12, 13 14 if recorded or a mic is used	- can see the speaker - there is usually visual support available (illustrations, ppt slides etc.) - a good lecturer employs a fair amount of 'redundancy' i.e. repeating or paraphrasing - a good lecturer 'signposts' his talk, i.e. uses discourse markers like 'There are three reasons for this', 'To sum up…' etc. - the listener might have the chance to ask for clarification - if recorded: can stop and investigate, and can rewind and listen again
3. telephone conversations, tele- or video-conferences	all, perhaps not 9, and not 10 if video conference	- can ask for clarification - can ask for repetition - if video: can see the speaker and thus gain some paralinguistic clues (maybe also some environmental ones)
4. listening to or watching news, sports programs or documentaries on TV or in the radio or online	1-3 7 12-14	- plenty of visual clues - can usually record and wind back for repetition or clarification
5. films	all except 10	- plenty of visual clues - can usually record (or we are watching a recording) – can wind back for repetition or clarification - most of it we don't have to understand too accurately

6. announcements at railway stations or airports when travelling abroad	1, 2, 5, 6, 8 10, 11, 12, 14	- the language that we can expect to hear is restricted in range – so we have to 'recognise' from a predicted choice rather than really understand precisely - there is usually some visual confirmation (the info is also written on some board)
7. engaging in private conversations with individuals of other nationalities – using English as a common language	1-9 maybe 11 12,13	- the utterances are relatively short - there is a lot of 'redundancy' (Ur 2012:104) in the communication: repetitions, rephrasing etc. - can ask for clarification - can ask for repetition - can ask the speaker to slow down - can see the speaker and thus gain a wealth of paralinguistic clues - as listener and speaker share the same environment, there is a wealth of environmental clues
8. listening to songs	1,2 3, 8 - the melody can blur the speech and thus act as a kind of background noise 6, 7 - informal words, slang and individual, free use of certain words 9 – a blend of various voices and sounds of instruments Possibly 10 14	- most students are highly motivated by listening to songs – it can disinhibit students and at same time stimulate them. This condition is optimal for learning - there are usually lots of repetitions in the words of a song
9. Your own:		
10. Your own:		