Using Unscripted Spoken Texts in the Teaching of Second Language Listening

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Most spoken texts that are used in second language (L2) listening classroom activities are scripted texts, where the text is written, revised, polished, and then read aloud with artificially clear enunciation and slow rate of speech. This article explores the field's overreliance on these scripted texts, at the expense of including unscripted spoken texts that have very different textual and phonological characteristics. It describes how scripted and unscripted texts differ and examines why textbook publishers might avoid using unscripted spoken texts. The article concludes with a number of suggestions for incorporating unscripted spoken texts into the teaching of L2 listening comprehension, with the goals of making learners aware of the textual and phonological characteristics of unscripted texts, preparing L2 learners to be able to comprehend real-world spoken language, and promoting learners' communicative competence.
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It is an only too well-known phenomenon—a learner has studied a foreign language for years, diligently attending class; spending hundreds of classroom hours reading, writing, speaking, and listening to the target language; interacting with other learners; studying word lists; and completing workbook after workbook of grammar activities. Yet when that learner finds herself in a "real-world" language context trying to converse with a speaker of the target language, she is unable to comprehend almost anything of what that speaker says.

At least part of the reason that this phenomenon is so prevalent is the way foreign languages are taught in the classroom. Even

though great changes have taken place in the last few decades regarding language teaching pedagogy due to the prevalence of communicative language teaching, there still persists in many foreign language classrooms throughout the world an overemphasis on the structural components of language. But even in classrooms that focus on teaching language communicatively, with massive amounts of input and interaction in the target language, learners still often have difficulties understanding real-world spoken language. This article proposes that the nature of the spoken texts that are used for teaching and practicing second language (L2) listening contributes to the lack of oral interactional competence commonly found in otherwise advanced language learners.

OVERVIEW OF THE ISSUE

In formal learning contexts, there are four main types of spoken input that L2 learners are exposed to: spoken input from the teacher, spoken input from fellow learners, spoken language the learners themselves produce and self-monitor (or listen to recordings of themselves), and spoken input from audio and audiovisual recordings that the teacher provides for the students in listening tasks. Regarding the teacher's speech, the concept of *teacher talk* (Chaudron, 1988) or *foreigner talk* (Hatch, 1983) is well documented—many language teachers tend to speak to L2 learners more slowly, enunciate more clearly, and use simpler syntax and vocabulary than they would in speaking to nonlearners. The speech produced by fellow L2 learners (and by themselves) also differs from that of more advanced and native speakers of the target language (Porter, 1986), and the characteristics of this speech are similar in many ways to the characteristics of teacher talk (e.g., slower rate of speech, simpler syntax, limited range of vocabulary). Although the input provided by the speech of the teacher and fellow learners is obviously very important in developing L2 listening ability, these types of spoken input are limited in that they are representative of only a narrow range of the different types of spoken texts and genres that learners will encounter outside the classroom. In addition to teacher and student talk, learners need to be exposed to other

genres of spoken texts in order to develop their communicative competence in a range of different contexts, and thus it is necessary for teachers to provide audio and audiovisual recordings for L2 listening classroom tasks. For many foreign language learners, virtually all of the spoken input they encounter occurs inside the classroom. Thus, the focus of this article is on the features and characteristics of the different types of spoken texts that the teacher provides for the students in listening comprehension practice through the use of audio or audiovisual recordings, and how teachers can best utilize these texts in their teaching.

"Textbook Texts" and the L2 Classroom
Virtually every foreign language textbook purporting to promote communicative competence now includes a DVD with audio or audiovisual recordings of spoken texts to be used for teaching L2 listening ability. These *textbook texts* are prepared by the authors and publishers, and the types of learning tasks that are associated with them can vary widely. Although many language teachers will also supplement these texts by using audio and video recordings from TV shows, films, and various Internet resources (e.g., YouTube), for many language classrooms these textbook texts are virtually the only oral input that learners are exposed to other than the speaking performed by the teacher and the other classroom learners. Almost invariably, these textbook texts consist of scripted texts,[1] that is, the textbook authors first write the script for the spoken text. This script is then revised and rewritten, edited, and polished. Then the texts are recorded while being read aloud, often by professional actors that have been trained to enunciate clearly and to speak slowly.

In contrast, *unscripted texts* are texts that are composed and uttered by the speaker more or less simultaneously, rather than being planned, rehearsed, and then spoken. I am deliberately avoiding the term *authentic texts* here, because of the difficulty in defining exactly what *authentic* means (for a thorough review of

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[1] There are some notable exceptions, of course, which seek to emphasize the "authentic" nature of the spoken texts used.

the issue of authentic language for L2 learners, see Gilmore, 2007; Guariento & Morley, 2001; Widdowson, 1998). Rather, I am focusing on a narrower issue in the authenticity debate—that of scripted texts versus unscripted texts.

Scripted texts are an important genre of speaking, and being able to comprehend these types of texts is an important component of L2 listening ability. Things like TV shows, films, television and radio commercials, and many other real-world spoken texts are scripted texts usually not produced specifically for L2 learners and thus are a genre of spoken texts (Coniam, 2002, refers to these types of texts as *quasi-authentic*) that L2 listeners need exposure to. Scripted texts should and will continue to be an important part of classroom L2 listening teaching and practice.

However, these scripted texts represent only a portion of the types of spoken texts that L2 listeners need to be able to comprehend. Tannen (1982) describes a *continuum of orality*, with scripted texts that are read aloud on the literate end of the continuum and unplanned spoken discourse at the oral end of the continuum. Similarly, McCarthy and Carter (1995) describe a continuum of texts from "speakerly" to "writerly" (p. 216). For many L2 classroom learners, the vast majority of the spoken input that they receive consists of texts at the literate end of the continuum, and thus these learners are unprepared for and unable to process and comprehend unplanned spoken discourse that they might encounter outside the classroom (Dupuy, 1999).

Of course, many classroom teachers are aware of the need to provide L2 learners with vast amounts of spoken input for the development of their L2 listening proficiency and to supplement the textbook texts with other spoken texts for listening practice. But again, these supplementary texts are often scripted texts in the form of television shows, movies, and so on. Undoubtedly, some classroom teachers strive to expose L2 learners to unscripted spoken texts in the target language, yet the extent to which this practice is common is unknown. There do not seem to be any large-scale surveys of this issue, although such a study certainly is needed.

A number of researchers have reviewed English as a second language (ESL) and English as a foreign language (EFL) textbooks

for the types of spoken texts that are included in the textbooks for L2 listening practice. Flowerdew and Miller (1997) reviewed five English for academic purposes (EAP) textbooks and found that the spoken lecture textbook texts differed dramatically from real-life lectures. They recommend that L2 students be "exposed to lecture data which is delivered spontaneously, and has not been scripted or dressed up to look like spoken text when in fact it is really written language" (p. 44). Thompson (2003) describes how metadiscoursal and interactional signals serve to help organize academic lectures and compares the occurrence of metadiscoursal and intonational signals in actual lectures with the lecture texts found in five different sets of EAP materials. Thompson found important difference between the actual lecture texts and the textbook academic texts in the EAP materials, even in materials that purported to be representative of real-life lectures. Gilmore (2004) surveyed seven EFL textbooks and found that the textbook dialogues differed considerably from real-life interactions, although Gilmore also suggests that more recent textbooks were improving and had "begun to incorporate more of the discourse features found in authentic data" (p. 370). Gilmore (2007) extensively reviews the use of authentic materials in L2 teaching and concludes that a "fundamental change" (p. 99) is required in which L2 classroom syllabi need to better incorporate naturalistic materials, including spoken texts. Thus, the argument being made here is that L2 teachers must be aware of the need to supplement the scripted textbook texts with various forms of unscripted texts and to include texts from the oral end of the orality continuum, because unscripted texts are representative of many of the types of spoken texts learners will encounter in real-world communicative contexts. Focusing on and exposing learners only to scripted texts in classroom teaching does a disservice to those learners.

CHARACTERISTICS OF TEXTBOOK TEXTS VERSUS CHARACTERISTICS OF UNSCRIPTED SPOKEN LANGUAGE

Numerous researchers (e.g., Chafe, 1982, 1985; Flowerdew, 1994; Halliday, 1985; Shohamy & Inbar, 1991; Tannen, 1982) have

described how scripted texts that are written and read aloud differ from unscripted, unplanned spoken discourse. These differences can be divided into three main categories: hesitation phenomena characteristic of unplanned spoken discourse, the organizational and lexico-grammatical characteristics of scripted and unscripted texts, and the phonological modifications characteristic of unplanned spoken texts. These three categories are described in more detail below.

Interactive speaking and listening can be quite cognitively demanding, and this is especially true for L2 speakers (Vandergrift, 2004). A person must process the oral texts spoken by the other speaker(s) in real time, interpret and evaluate the message, and simultaneously construct an appropriate response. Because the text construction is done in real time, there are often numerous silent pauses, filled pauses, hesitations, and false starts. Griffiths (1991) refers to these as *hesitation phenomena*. These hesitation phenomena are due in part to the real-time nature of the composing process and often occur while the speaker considers what to say and how to say it (Chafe, 1985; Samuels, 1984). Research in conversation analysis has shown that such phenomena carry interactional meaning. For example, a pause might indicate that there is something problematic in the preceding utterance (Schegloff, Jefferson, & Sacks, 1977). McCarthy (2005) describes how pauses found in native speaker discourse are often a result of a speaker recasting an utterance, and these pauses occur constantly in natural discourse.

The way texts are organized, as well as the lexico-grammatical characteristics of texts, also differ extensively according to whether the texts are scripted or unscripted. Unplanned spoken discourse tends to be less logically organized than planned texts, again because of the time constraints imposed by the real-time nature of conversational interaction (Chafe, 1982). Similarly, unplanned spoken discourse tends to have more redundancies than planned discourse (Haviland & Clark, 1974). Unplanned spoken discourse tends to have less complex syntax and shorter idea units (Chafe, 1982, 1985; Halliday, 1985) and fewer embedded clauses, nominalizations, and agentless passives (Biber, 1988). Unscripted texts also tend to contain more slang and colloquial language than

scripted texts (Brown, 1995; Chafe, 1985). Based on their work in corpus linguistics, specifically focusing on spoken corpora, McCarthy and Carter (e.g., Carter and McCarthy, 1997; McCarthy & Carter, 1995, 2001) have written extensively about the differences between written and spoken[2] grammatical systems. It is beyond the purview of this article to detail the differences, but the differences are extensive, pervasive, and exist "at whatever level of grammatical category" (McCarthy & Carter, 2001, p. 51). Similarly, work by McCarthy and colleagues suggests just how different the lexical characteristics are between the two types of texts. For example, McCarthy (2012) describes how there is only about a 65% overlap between the 2,000 most common words in spoken corpora and the 2,000 most common words in written corpora. Another relevant example is provided by McCarthy (2010), who writes about the importance of *turn-openers* and *turn-closers* in conversational interaction and spoken fluency. He lists the 20 most common turn-openers (the words or phrases a speaker uses in interactive talk to link with and respond to the other speaker's previous utterance) in the CANCODE spoken corpus, and the four most common are *yeah*, *mm*, *oh*, and *and* (McCarthy, 2010, p. 7). McCarthy's work demonstrates that the lexico-grammatical characteristics of real-world spoken corpora differ dramatically from the lexico-grammatical characteristics of the scripted language found in many textbooks. Similarly, Cullen and Kuo (2007) surveyed 24 general EFL textbooks published in the United Kingdom, investigating the extent to which spoken grammar was addressed in these textbooks. They found that, although some of the textbooks did seek to address at least some aspects of spoken grammar, the coverage was limited, and the authors argue that more attention to features of spoken grammar was needed in the textbooks.

The phonological characteristics of unscripted texts also tend to be very different from the phonological characteristics of scripted texts that are written and read aloud. The concatenated speech that is typical of unplanned spoken discourse involves

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[2] The *written* and *spoken* systems referred to here are essentially equivalent to *planned* and *unplanned* texts.

phonological modifications, including linking, assimilation, deletion, epenthesis, and reduction (Celce-Murcia, Brinton, & Goodwin, 1994). People untrained in linguistics are often unaware that such phenomena occur in natural speech, and this is especially true of learners who are exposed only to the scripted, artificially enunciated spoken texts found in most textbook texts. Related to this is the difficulty that lower ability L2 listeners have in segmenting the incoming oral input into meaningful units (Vandergrift, 2007). Vandergrift (2007) describes how "listeners, unlike readers, do not have the luxury of regular spaces that signal where words begin or end" (p. 194) and argues that it is necessary for L2 listeners to develop these word segmentation skills. Yet the artificially enunciated (and unconcatenated) spoken language these listeners are usually exposed to hinders this development.

Going beyond the scripted versus unscripted text divide, one last component to consider about textbook texts is the types of speakers used in the recordings. Rarely do the texts used in language classrooms have speakers with nonstandard, ethnic, or regional accents; speakers of English as a second or foreign language; speakers from expanding and outer circle countries; or speakers of English as an international language. There is a large amount of research in the literature suggesting that familiarity with and meaningful exposure to a particular accent or language variety makes it more comprehensible for listeners (e.g., Derwing & Munro, 1997; Flowerdew, 1994; Gass & Varonis, 1984; Major, Fitzmaurice, Bunta, & Balasubramanian, 2005). It seems unlikely that L2 learners will interact only with speakers of the standard variety, and thus the lack of exposure to other varieties in the classroom certainly contributes to the phenomenon that these learners often experience of not being able to understand real-world spoken English encountered outside the classroom.

POSSIBLE REASONS FOR THE LACK OF UNSCRIPTED SPOKEN TEXTS IN LANGUAGE TEXTBOOKS

A legitimate question that can be asked is why the spoken texts included in language textbooks for teaching and practicing listening do not include more texts from the oral end of the

orality continuum. After all, this phenomenon of L2 learners not being able to comprehend unscripted spoken language is hardly a recent development. Gilmore (2007, p. 97), in a state-of-the-art article focusing on the use of authentic[3] materials in foreign language learning, describes how, even though there have been "appeals for greater authenticity in language learning" for more than 30 years, progress in the area has been minimal. Gilmore reviews extensively the "gap between authentic language and textbook language" (p. 98) and attributes the artificial nature of these texts as being due to textbook writers' reliance on intuition rather than spoken corpora, a bias toward linguistic rather than sociolinguistic rules, and a lack of appropriate pragmatic models. Gilmore (2007, pp. 112–113) also lists a number of possible reasons why language textbooks have been slow to incorporate "authentic materials," including the divide between applied linguistics researchers and language practitioners, and he describes how textbook publishers are reluctant to follow the "pendulum swings" in the profession, take risks by using innovative materials, and abandon a structural syllabus because of its seemingly objective and concrete nature.

Another possible reason for the reluctance of the publishing industry to incorporate unscripted texts is that these types of texts might sound unprofessional. Tomlinson (2012), in a comprehensive review of the issue of materials development for language teaching, argues that "there is no escaping the fact that the main concerns of publishers relate to the extent to which their draft materials appeal to their intended users in terms of appearance, content, and approach" (p. 150). It is understandable that a publishing company would be reluctant to create DVD recordings with seemingly disorganized spoken texts that include false starts, unfilled and filled pauses (*um*, *uh*, *you know*), and grammatical errors, with mumbling and seemingly poorly enunciated speech full of connected speech such as linking, assimilation, and reduction. This view is shortsighted, however,

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[3] The literature that is reviewed in this section explores the notion of authentic materials, and thus the term is used here.

because these are not just superficial performance characteristics, but many of these phenomena contain meaning in the same way that grammar and words have meaning. Additionally, this is the way unscripted language is actually spoken and is representative of the type of language that learners will encounter in real-world speaking and listening contexts. Although potential buyers' perception of the "unprofessional" nature of these texts is obviously a legitimate concern, publishers could emphasize the unscripted nature of these types of texts and market their textbooks as helping learners be able to comprehend real-world spoken language.

Finally, many language professionals believe that these types of texts are too difficult and inappropriate for many learners and hard to actually incorporate into language teaching. Richards (2006) writes extensively about "the myth of authenticity" (p. 16), arguing that using authentic texts is not always necessary or feasible. Kmiecik and Barkhuizen (2006) found that learners overall had more positive attitudes toward nonauthentic texts, because they felt that authentic texts were too fast and had difficult vocabulary. Peacock (1997) found that, whereas EFL learners reported being more motivated when authentic listening materials were used, they also found the authentic materials less interesting than artificial materials. Guariento and Morley (2001) caution that the use of authentic texts with lower ability students can lead to frustration, confusion, demotivation, and poor language learning outcomes.

It could also be argued, however, that it is exactly for these reasons that unscripted spoken texts should be used with L2 learners. In other words, those characteristics of unscripted spoken texts that make them difficult for learners to comprehend (e.g., fast rate of speech, connected speech, hesitation phenomena, oral organizational characteristics, spoken grammar) are exactly the things that learners should be exposed to in the classroom and explicitly taught (Vandergrift & Goh, 2012). It is certainly important to not overwhelm L2 listeners with frustratingly difficult texts, but unscripted texts can be used and the task demands manipulated so as to make the input more comprehensible and accessible (see the "Suggestions" section

below). Indeed, numerous researchers (e.g., Bacon & Finnemann, 1990; Field, 2000; Nunan, 1999) convincingly argue that beginning-level learners should be exposed to authentic oral input because it can create more positive attitudes in learners and make learning more interesting and meaningful.

A final reason for the lack of unscripted spoken texts in L2 textbooks concerns the difficulty in creating learning tasks for these types of texts. It is difficult for textbook writers to find and choose an appropriate unscripted text and then create learning tasks to accompany it (Richards, 2006). Instead, it is much easier and more efficient to develop the learning tasks first and then script and create a text that will work well with the envisioned tasks (Buck, 2001; Carr, 2011). While recognizing the difficulties in creating learning tasks for unscripted spoken texts, this hardly seems insurmountable for professional textbook writers and lesson developers, and although more resources may be needed to utilize unscripted spoken texts, the effort is worthwhile if the goal is to promote learners' communicative competence. The teaching and learning tasks associated with these unscripted spoken texts could specifically focus on teaching learners how to process and comprehend this type of language (suggestions are given below). Again, textbook writers and publishers can stress the notion that their product will help learners' development of communicative competence.

The problem of a seeming reluctance to use unscripted spoken texts in the L2 classroom is exacerbated and perpetuated by the types of spoken texts that are used in tests of listening comprehension, especially large-scale, high-stakes standardized tests of L2 listening ability. The spoken texts that are used on the listening tasks in these tests again are invariably scripted (for the same reasons given above related to textbook texts) and rarely include the hesitation phenomena and the phonological and textual characteristics of unplanned spoken discourse (Wagner, 2013). In addition, the speakers on these tests are almost invariably native speakers speaking standard British or American English (Jenkins, 2006; Wagner, 2013). The washback effect of these high-stakes assessments can be considerable for course and national curricula that are designed to train students to do well on these tests. If these high-stakes assessments use only scripted and

polished spoken texts (spoken by British or American standard English speakers) that have few of the phonological and textual characteristics of unplanned spoken discourse, then the curricula and classes that are created to "teach to the test" will have little or no focus on training learners to be able to process and comprehend conversational, real-world, spoken language (Wagner, 2013).

INCORPORATING UNSCRIPTED SPOKEN TEXTS INTO L2 LISTENING TEACHING

Again, if the goal is to develop learners' communicative competence, then it is imperative that teachers expose L2 learners to a variety of unscripted spoken texts when teaching L2 listening. By providing unscripted spoken texts that include the characteristics of unplanned spoken discourse (i.e., filled and unfilled pauses, false starts, spoken grammatical norms, phonological modifications of connected and reduced speech), and by providing texts involving nonnative speakers, speakers with regional dialects, and speakers of English as an international language, L2 listening teachers can direct learners' attention to these issues and better prepare them for successful real-world communication. This is very much in line with Vandergrift and Goh's (2012) description of a metacognitive approach to listening instruction, in which L2 listeners are trained to consciously think about their listening process in order to "regulate their own learning" and "deal with the listening input" (p. 5). Making learners aware of the differences is an important responsibility of the teacher, because once learners become aware of the characteristics of unscripted spoken texts they can attend to and notice these characteristics in subsequent input (McCarthy & Carter, 1995; Schmidt, 1990, 2001). McCarthy and Carter (1995) describe how this consciousness-raising can be taken even further, by "encouraging learners to draw conclusions about the interpersonal functions of different lexico-grammatical options, and to develop a capacity for noticing such features as they move through the different stages and cycles of language learning" (p. 217).

One of the challenges for teachers is in obtaining recordings of unplanned spoken discourse for use in the L2 classroom. Easily accessible sources for spoken recordings are YouTube and similar sites. Many YouTube videos include scripted texts, but many others are spontaneous and unplanned. Students could be involved in the search for unscripted texts and assigned outside-of-class activities in which they locate various YouTube videos with unscripted spoken texts. Another excellent resource is the English Listening Lesson Library Online (www.elllo.org), which has thousands of searchable spoken texts with written transcripts, many of which are unscripted and unplanned. Another obvious, yet often overlooked resource for spoken texts is the teacher and his or her friends and family. Digital audio and video recorders are inexpensive, easy to use, and unobtrusive. The teacher can record normal conversations, dialogues, phone calls, and so forth (with permission from the participants, of course) that can then be utilized in the L2 classroom.

SUGGESTIONS FOR USING UNSCRIPTED SPOKEN TEXTS IN THE L2 CLASSROOM

Make Students Aware of the Differences Between Scripted Texts and Unscripted Texts

As stated above, L2 learners are often unaware of how the hesitation phenomena and the phonological and textual characteristics of unplanned spoken discourse differ from the characteristics of scripted and polished spoken language (although they do seem to be aware of the artificially slow speech rate of many textbook texts).

Buck (1995) suggests that having learners transcribe oral texts and then compare them to written texts is an effective way to make learners aware of and be able to identify the differences between unplanned, spoken texts and planned, written texts. Depending on ability level and interests, learners can transcribe oral texts of varying lengths from the L2 or even their own first language (L1). Learners are often amazed to discover the false starts, filled and unfilled pauses, lack of grammaticality, lack

of formal sentences, and seemingly disorganized nature of unplanned spoken discourse, even among native speakers. Similarly, learners are often surprised to see (and hear) how unscripted, concatenated speech has phonological modifications such as linking, assimilation, deletion, and reduction.

After students have transcribed an unscripted oral text, they can then create a "written" version of the text, in which concatenated speech is replaced with written texts with white spaces between the words, the pauses omitted, the grammatical "errors" fixed, false starts eliminated, run-on sentences converted into complete sentences, and phonological modifications converted to standard orthography. The comparison of these two versions of the text is very effective in serving as a consciousness-raising task and helps to make learners aware of just how different unplanned spoken discourse is from scripted texts and how written and spoken grammars differ (McCarthy & Carter, 1995), as well as the importance of word segmentation skills (Vandergrift & Goh, 2012).

Use Unscripted Texts, but Change the Task Demands (e.g., Use Short Segments of Text, Provide Repeated Playings, Use or Insert Pauses)

Even for lower ability learners, unscripted texts that have the phonological and textual characteristics of unplanned spoken discourse can be used, but the demands of the task can be modified to make the input more accessible and comprehensible. For example, unscripted texts can be used, with pauses inserted at natural discourse boundaries. The pauses can be added using software editing programs or by simply pushing the pause button on the playback device. Doing this allows lower ability listeners to "catch up" with the spoken texts while still experiencing many of the characteristics of unplanned spoken discourse (Blau, 1990, 1991). Listening tasks can also be modified to include listening to shorter segments of input. With an unscripted spoken text that is 3 minutes long, for example, the teacher can use shorter (e.g., 20-second) segments of the text with lower ability classes, 1-minute-long segments with intermediate-ability classes, and the entire 3-minute text with higher ability classes. Learners can be

allowed to listen to the texts repeatedly, with a different while-listening task assigned for each listening.

As noted earlier, using these types of texts and then manipulating the task demands to make them more accessible is somewhat of a controversial issue, especially when used with lower ability learners. Richards (2006) and Widdowson (1998) argue against the use of "authentic language" in classrooms, and others (e.g., Guariento & Morley, 2001; Kmiecik & Barkhuizen, 2006; Peacock, 1997) have described some of the difficulties and shortcomings of using "authentic" texts with lower ability learners. However, my argument here is not that unscripted spoken texts be used exclusively. Rather, what I am advocating is that instead of relying solely on scripted texts, teachers should expose learners to unscripted texts as well. Rather than using only scripted texts where the speakers speak very slowly and artificially so that the listeners can comprehend the input, teachers need to also expose learners to unscripted spoken texts, texts that are similar to and representative of the types of spoken input learners will encounter outside of the classroom. By providing these types of texts, and providing the scaffolding that makes these texts accessible and comprehensible, teachers can help develop and improve learners' communicative competence.

Provide Unscripted, Interactive, Conversational Texts for Learners to Examine Interactional Norms

One of the most important attributes of the use of unscripted spoken texts in the L2 classroom is that these types of texts can be very useful in promoting the discourse competence of learners. Gilmore (2007) highlights a number of ways in which much of the discourse in textbook texts is not representative of the discourse patterns found in real-world language, citing specifically the artificial nature of turn-taking procedures, the use of discourse markers, direction giving, telephone dialogues, and service encounters, among others. Using unscripted texts in which proficient speakers of the target language provide realistic models of turn-taking procedures, discourse markers, telephone dialogues, and so forth can promote discourse competence in L2 learners (Brown & Yule, 1983; Gilmore, 2007). Listening comprehension

tasks can be constructed using these unscripted texts, and then a more pointed focus on the discourse patterns can follow, in which the learners analyze the target discourse patterns.

The divide between applied linguistics researchers and language teachers remains significant (Gilmore, 2007). However, the results of research in conversational and discourse analysis, and in corpus linguistics, have numerous implications for materials development and teaching pedagogy, and progress has been made in bridging this research–practice divide. Wong and Waring (2010) use conversation analysis (CA) concepts and findings to expand teachers' pedagogical knowledge and instructional practices by explicating the variety of interactional practices that are an integral part of communicative competence. Similarly, McCarten and McCarthy (2010) describe how research involving spoken corpora can inform teaching materials, speaking syllabuses, and coursebooks. Gilmore (2004) compares the discourse patterns of service encounters found in real-life spoken language data and in service encounters in texts from ESL textbooks.

Although the focus of this article is listening ability, an obvious benefit of using spoken texts in which proficient speakers of the target language actually engage in unscripted conversations and discourse is that this will also be beneficial in the development of learners' interactive speaking ability. And in reality it is impossible to separate speaking and listening in an interactive speaking context. McCarthy (2012) talks about the importance of *engaged listenership*, in which listeners show comprehension through the use of appropriate turn-openers and turn-closers, acknowledgments, latches, interruptions, and backchanneling. Teaching and learning tasks can be created based on these unscripted texts as a form of consciousness-raising, and to help make learners aware of these phenomena. Language learners who have been made aware of and who consciously listen for these different types of discourse functions will be more likely to be able to eventually perform these functions than learners who have never been exposed to or had their attention drawn to them.

Explicitly Teach Listeners the Types of Filled Pauses Common to Unscripted Texts (e.g., in English, *uh, um, you know*)

As stated above, L2 learners are often unaware that unplanned spoken discourse has numerous filled and unfilled pauses, false starts, and repetitions. Research has shown that texts with these hesitation phenomena can be more difficult for L2 learners to comprehend (Freedle & Kostin, 1999; Griffiths, 1991; Voss, 1979). For example, Griffiths (1991) describes how L2 listeners have difficulties decoding these components of unplanned spoken discourse and sometimes try to assign semantic significance to these hesitations, not realizing that they are often a result of the nature of the composing process that occurs in real time. By using transcripts of unplanned spoken discourse, learners can be made aware of these hesitation phenomena. Learners can literally see in the transcripts when and where the hesitations occur, can hear what they sound like in the oral recordings, and can analyze how filled pauses sound in English in comparison to their L1. Learners can also examine how pauses are often the result of speakers recasting their utterances in order to cooperatively create a conversation (McCarthy, 2005).

By equipping L2 listeners with this knowledge, learners can recognize these filled pauses and false starts, and instead of trying to decode the hesitation phenomena and assign semantic significance to them, they will be aware of and familiar with them when they encounter them in real-world speaking and listening contexts. Again, by providing unscripted spoken texts in which the listeners can hear the hesitation phenomena that occur in proficient speakers of the target language, learners' awareness of the phenomena can be increased.

Provide Texts With Different Types of Accents (Regional Accents, Nonnative Speakers, Speakers of English as an International Language)

Using spoken texts with speakers that do not speak a standard variety of English is useful for L2 listeners for three reasons. First, it helps learners become aware of the different varieties of English spoken throughout the world, and this awareness will lead to learners' noticing and consciousness of the different varieties in

subsequent input (Schmidt, 1990). Second, it allows learners to become familiar with a particular variety or accent of English, which should serve to make learners better able to comprehend speakers of that particular variety in a real-world context (Derwing & Munro, 1997; Gass & Varonis, 1984; Major et al., 2005). Finally, it helps learners realize that there is not any one type of "correct" English and recognize the legitimacy of different varieties of English (Jenkins, 1998), which can serve to promote cultural as well as linguistic competence (Grill, 2010).

An excellent resource for teachers in this respect is the Speech Accent Archive from George Mason University (http://accent.gmu.edu). This archive presents a huge set of speech samples in which speakers from hundreds of different language backgrounds read the same paragraph in English. Teachers can use this archive to create classroom activities in which students have to guess whether the speaker is a native speaker of English and what country or region the speaker is from, and students can be asked to explain why they think that speaker is from that particular region based on the phonological characteristics of his or her speech. Of particular interest for learners is hearing the English speech samples from speakers who share their own L1. Another resource for comparing the accents of speakers from different regions and different countries around the world is Sounds Comparisons from the University of Edinburgh (www.soundcomparisons.com). At this website, one can hear 110 words spoken by speakers from 70 regions throughout the world.

CONCLUSION

The extent to which L2 listening can actually be taught is debated within the field of English language teaching. Some argue that the explicit teaching of strategies to L2 listeners is productive, efficient, and necessary (e.g., Field, 1998, 2000), whereas others argue that the role of the L2 listening teacher is to provide a great deal of listening practice in order to enable L2 listeners to automatize the process of listening (Ridgway, 2000a, 2000b). No one, however, would dispute the importance of providing large amounts of spoken input for L2 listeners to process and practice. At least some of the spoken input that L2 teachers provide for students must

include unscripted texts that are representative of the types of real-world spoken language listeners will encounter outside the classroom. In addition, good listening teachers need to create the optimal "conditions for the natural learning process to take place" (Buck, 1995, p. 122) by providing opportunities for meaningful practice; by providing texts that are interesting and motivating and of the appropriate difficulty level; by directing learners' attention to the listening process; and by making learners consciously aware of the phonological, lexico-grammatical, and organizational characteristics of unscripted spoken texts. Doing so promotes the communicative competence of L2 learners and helps them be able to understand not only the target language spoken in the classroom, but also the target language spoken in the real world.

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