

Responding to different text genres for increased ESL listening skills and adult literacy development

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ABSTRACT

Listening is an essential component of English language acquisition and extremely important to communicate with others. This article highlights the importance for instructors and learners to understand factors that make listening difficult. This qualitative study describes findings from teaching English as a second language to 20 adult learners enrolled in an intermediate class at a community college. It discusses the teaching of listening as a process following a three-step cycle that includes pre-listening, listening, and post-listening activities while also using a variety of text genres such as news reports, poems and songs, commercials and advertisement, children's literature, and financial literature. Data included classroom field notes, steps teaching listening as a process, and a qualitative questionnaire. Findings are presented by outlining the process of teaching listening as well as the literacy connection resulting from implementing this approach. Defining the text genre, as well as describing the features and language functions involved in listening, made the listening practice more meaningful for English learners. Based on the questionnaire responses, explicitly teaching listening as a process and exposure to different text genres positively impacted the students' learning. This teaching approach encouraged deeper engagement with the message making the connection between listening practice and English literacy development readily evident. Exposure to listening to a variety of text genres enriched the learners' ability to use language meaningfully and contextually. It develops listening comprehension by allowing the learner to gain understanding of language in the broader context of the human experience.

Keywords: *Adult literacy, English language teaching, Listening genres, Listening, Adult learning, Literacy development.*

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Highlights of this paper

- Exposure to listening to a variety of text genres and understanding listening as a process enriches the adult learner's ability to use language meaningfully and contextually.
- Through these practices, the learners gain understanding of language in the broader context of the human experience.
- They practice understanding tone and emotion, recognizing shifts in mood, detecting sarcasm, and identifying a variety of emotions, facilitating the listening comprehension tasks.

1. INTRODUCTION

Adults spend forty to fifty percent of communication time listening; similarly, in the language classroom, they receive as much as 90% of the information through listening (Romanova, 2017). Listening is one of the first steps in acquiring a language and the natural first step to speaking (Newton & Nation, 2021). Thus, to obtain a reasonable level of comprehension, learners need to be exposed to a large amount of comprehensible oral messages and listening practice. Extensive practice significantly impacts the development of listening skills (Gönülal, 2020). It is crucial to offer a variety of meaningful listening practice opportunities since "exposure to ample input will promote a reasonable level of comprehension" (Gönülal, 2020). Since listening is needed to accomplish everyday-life-tasks, listening practice should train language learners to achieve better interactions with people outside the classroom. Extensive listening practice will equip them with skills to engage in conversation and respond to different situations appropriately. Thus, practicing listening in and outside the classroom should be a continual endeavor.

Working on developing listening also improves pronunciation and vocabulary, which in turn contributes to improving fluency in other language skills, namely reading, writing, and speaking (Newton & Nation, 2021). Listening practice supports learning correct pronunciation, learning new words, and learning about the natural pacing of speech, which help students become fluent in all language skills. In particular, Brown and Lee (2015) advocate for the integration of language skills arguing that it results in "better retention of principles of effective speaking, listening, reading and writing" (p. 315). Therefore, integrating language skills in English language teaching (ELT) is a must since "listening frequently implies speaking, and in academic contexts possibly note taking; speaking virtually always implies a listener; writing and reading share obvious links; and the interconnection goes on" (Brown & Lee, 2015). This dynamic nature of language acquisition as a process in which all skills are interrelated supports the goals of the present article highlighting the connections between listening and literacy development.

Effective listeners focus actively on the speaker, the message, the context, and are able to interpret meaning, respond thoughtfully, and promote interactive communication. In addition, the teaching of listening can bring better results for the learner when it is approached as a process rather than as a product. Brown and Lee (2015) further explain that listening is an interactive process and includes decoding sounds, determining the function of the speech event, activating schemata, assigning literal meaning, assigning intended meaning, determining the demand for short-term, or long-term memory, and retaining essential information or meaning. In summary, listening is an active and interactive communication act, and as such it should be taught as a process to equip the learners with adequate strategies to become better listeners.

This qualitative study describes findings from teaching English as a second language to 20 adult learners enrolled in an intermediate class at a community college. It discusses the teaching of listening as a process following a three-step cycle that includes pre-listening, listening, and post-listening activities while also using a variety of text genres such as news reports, poems and songs, commercials and advertisement, children's literature, and financial literature. Thus, the teaching activities and strategies described in the article illustrate the authors' ELT experiences and the learners' opinions about this process.

2. WHY IS LISTENING DIFFICULT FOR ADULT LEARNERS?

When we, the article authors, have asked adult English learners “what makes listening difficult,” they have provided explanations such as “listening is difficult due to “lack of concentration”, “lack of practice outside the classroom”, “native English speakers speak too fast”, “people with different accents” and “interacting in a noisy environment.” Similarly, second language acquisition experts (Brown & Lee, 2015; Newton & Nation, 2021) also provide a comprehensive explanation of why listening might be difficult for adult learners.

Brown and Lee (2015) identified eight characteristics of spoken language which can contribute to making listening difficult. These characteristics can be summarized as follows: (1) Clustering – Grouping words and sounds together in a sentence to create a more rhythmic or musical effect, to emphasize certain words or sounds, or to be efficient and save time. (2) Redundancy – Rephrasing, repetition, elaboration, and insertion of expressions such as “I mean” and “you know” to help processing meaning by offering more time and extra information. (3) Reduced forms – Full forms of the English language are not provided in oral communication. (4) Performance variables – Include hesitations, false starts, pauses, and corrections present in everyday spoken language. These are also ungrammatical forms produced by native speakers such as “I don’t get no respect.” (5) Colloquial language – This refers to idioms, slang, reduced language forms (Y’all), and shared cultural knowledge manifested in conversations. (6) Rate of delivery – The stream of speech continues to flow even if you did not get the whole message. Native speakers speak too fast for language learners at first. (7) Stress, rhythm, and intonation – “The PREsident is INTERested in eLIMinating the Embargo”. These are significant patterns for interpreting questions, statements, emphasis, and understanding of subtle messages like sarcasm, endearment, solicitation, or praise. (8) Interaction – In a conversation you are expected to engage in negotiation, clarification, attending signals, turn taking, and topic nomination, maintenance and termination. Learning to listen includes learning to respond and to continue a chain of listening and responding.

Another factor that might make listening difficult is the lack of exposure and listening practice for learning to cope with a variety of English speaker accents. Buck (2001) explained that while listening to unfamiliar accents students may encounter critical difficulties and that unfamiliar accents may prevent listening comprehension. Likewise, Saraswaty (2018) discusses the need to make students aware of different native-speaker accents and let them experience different accents, especially while practicing extensive listening. It is important for learners to be aware of accents and how these are related to people’s identities and cultures (Sung, 2016a, 2016b). In real life all of us are exposed to a variety of accents. Therefore, this practice is not about reducing learners’ accents but to understand that accents are part of the spoken interactions that they will encounter while using the English language for real purposes.

2.1. Listening as a Process

Romanova (2017) describes listening as an “invisible mental process involving a sender, a message, and a receiver” (p. 67). Listeners process the message they receive and in doing so they engage in several processes. As they listen, they analyze vocabulary and grammar usage, interpret tone, and make inferences based on the sociocultural context (Romanova, 2017). Therefore, approaching listening as a process involves discussing specific issues with the learners such as what is involved in listening? Why is it important to listen to different accents? Why is listening a difficult skill to develop?

Likewise, Nguyen and Abbott (2016) advocate for teaching learners “how to use metacognitive strategies to deal with comprehension problems, monitor their progress, recognize and interpret prosodic elements appropriately, and notice and acquire target language forms” (pp. 79-80). In this sense, the use of metacognitive

listening activities promotes the implementation of listening as a process. Nguyen and Abbott (2016) suggest the implementation of four cognitive processes when teaching listening, which include (a) planning for listening, (b) monitoring comprehension, (c) solving comprehension problems, and (d) evaluating listening and problem solving. In other words, it is important to activate learners' prior knowledge, checking for comprehension, adopting appropriate strategies for grasping meaning, and reflecting on the difficulties encountered. Thus, ELT instructors should be intentional and explicitly teach listening; they should equip the learners with appropriate listening strategies and create lesson planning with a focus on listening.

Recent work by Newton and Nation (2021) discusses listening as involving two large sets of processes, bottom-up and top-down processes. On the one hand, the bottom-up process is explained as going from the parts to the whole. In other words, this process refers to the different activities and processes the listener employs assembling the message piece by piece to make sense of it. On the other hand, the top-down process is explained as going from the whole to the parts. The listener uses what they know, their prior knowledge, to make predictions and inferences and uses the different pieces of information provided in the message to confirm, correct, or add to the meaning of the message. Considering these two large processes together reinforces the argument of why listening should be taught as a process rather than a product. Similarly, Larrotta (2022) discusses the need to approach the teaching of listening as a process and as an extensive practice. Larrotta explains the importance of including technology and real-life topics/situations when approaching the teaching of listening as a process.

Besides explaining listening as a process, the following section introduces the English as a second language (ESL) classroom where the activities took place, and describes the listening activities built on the three-step teaching sequence suggested by Vandergrift (1999) and Vandergrift (2004). Thus, each activity follows three main steps and includes (1) pre-listening (planning), (2) listening (monitoring), and (3) post-listening (evaluating). The pre-listening step prepares the learners for the type of message they will hear and what to do while listening (e.g., take notes, answer questions, identify the context, search for information). The listening step requires the learners to focus on comprehension and utilize strategies (e.g., inferencing, elaboration, asking for clarification). Lastly, at the post-listening step the learners self-evaluate for comprehension, reflect on what they did during listening, and engage in creating a response by integrating other language skills (i.e., speaking, reading, writing).

3. THE ESL CLASSROOM

The English as a second language (ESL) classroom where the listening activities were implemented is an intermediate ESL class taught as a non-credit course free of cost. This ESL course is offered through the adult education program at a community college; it has open enrollment, and new students can join the class at different times of the year. The class meets year-round, twice a week for two hours with an average of 20 students in attendance. Even though the course is labeled as *Intermediate ESL*, the students that enroll have a range of language proficiency levels. The typical student for this class is 25 to 60 years old, with more female than male students in attendance. They come from ten to twelve different countries, and their goals to complete the class vary. Some students want to improve their English skills for personal fulfillment, others want to transition to college or the workforce, and others want to pass the citizenship test.

Data for this article come from field notes from classroom discussions, application of theory based on teaching listening as a process, and a qualitative questionnaire. After the term was over and after completing the last listening practice, a six-item questionnaire with multiple choice and open-ended questions was sent to the learners via *Qualtrics* to elicit feedback. Out of the 20 students, 15 volunteered to answer the questionnaire. In the qualitative questionnaire, the learners marked listening to children's literature as the activity that they enjoyed

most (12 votes) followed by poems and songs (10), commercials and advertisements (7), and news reports (6). All the respondents indicated that the listening activities improved their vocabulary knowledge. One of the students explained the following: “My listening comprehension has improved, and now I can maintain a conversation for longer and answer correctly.” All 15 respondents indicated that they have continued to practice the listening strategies they learned in class. Many shared that they continue to listen to music and examine the lyrics, watch videos, and practice with their friends and neighbors to extend their learning. The following sections present findings related to the implementation of listening as a process using a variety of text genres.

3.1. Listening to Different Genres

Listening to different genres can facilitate language learning; it can broaden learners’ vocabulary, use of idioms, and colloquial language. Introducing different genres to language learners for developing listening is beneficial and has a positive effect on listening comprehension (Hassani, Rahmany, & Babaei, 2014). Poetry may include figurative language and symbolism that evoke emotions for the listeners. Songs may offer modern, colloquial speech, and idiomatic expressions (Mobbs & Cuyul, 2018). News reports contain language that are factual and straightforward and can be used to assist learners with critical thinking and opinion-forming skills. In other words, practicing listening using different genres promotes comprehension by widening the learners’ word bank and deepening their understanding of how language is used in different situations. Learners can develop a greater ability to infer meaning and grasp complex concepts even when unfamiliar words are used.

The following section describes examples for the teaching of listening as a process following pre-listening, listening, and post-listening steps while using a variety of text genres such as news reports, poems and songs, commercials and advertisements, children’s literature, and financial literature. All these examples emphasize the need to teach vocabulary words explicitly at the start of the activity and in the pre-listening step. It is equally important to provide clear instructions to the learners prior to starting the listening practice. For example, instructions should include steps such as (1) Listen carefully. (2) Take notes. (3) Focus on answering the questions or accomplishing the tasks provided. (4) Discuss the questions in small groups. (5) Use the transcript of the text to listen for self-evaluation.

3.2. News Reports

Listening to news reports help language learners feel connected to their communities locally and globally. For example, they have expressed, “I watch the news on television but in my native language. In the classroom, I like that I am learning about what is happening around me while learning English.” The following is a description of how to use news reports to practice listening as a process and the connection to literacy development (see Table 1).

Table 1. Listening to news reports.

Pre-listening (Planning)	Listening (Monitoring)	Post-listening evaluating	Literacy connection
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Teach vocabulary words ● Ask questions for context 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Play audio several times ● Take notes ● Reduce the speed of audio clip ● Play audio several times ● Provide transcript 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ask comprehension questions ● Facilitate peer conversations with other learners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Learn vocabulary words ● Exposure to speech patterns intonation, and accents ● Practice note taking ● Comprehend questions ● Read authentic text ● Engage in dialogue

- Pre-Listening

Teach vocabulary words explicitly. Ask a series of questions to contextualize how the learners would normally experience a news report. Ask questions such as when do you listen to the news? Do you listen to the news on the radio, on a podcast, or on television?

- Listening

The news report is played several times for the learners to have ample time to take notes and for a chance to comprehend the message. The first time listening to the news report, the clip is slowed down to 75% of the normal speed to allow the learners to acclimate to the accent of the journalist and to pay attention to the events being reported. Then, they are asked to take notes for the gist of the message the first time and for specific information to find answers to specific questions the second time. At this point, the learners receive a transcript of the news report and listen to the news one last time following the text.

- Post-Listening

As a class, the learners answer several comprehension questions about the content of the news report. This step reinforces understanding of the piece of news they just heard. Next, using their notes, the learners engage in conversation with classmates to make connections to other related topics. This second group of questions are opinion-based questions to promote critical reflection. Through dialogue, they analyze critical viewpoints presented by different classmates. For example, in a news story centering on how the United States offered aid to another country who is at war, raise the question whether the students agree with this action and why.

- Classroom Example

In the ESL classroom, the students were presented with a news report posted by *Voice of America (VOA) Learning English* on the topics “conflicts between Iran and the U.S., Palestine and U.S. sanctions on violence acts, immigrants escaping detention from Malaysia, and air pollution in Vietnam.” The first time the students listened to the report it was difficult for them to get the message, but listening several times, taking notes, asking questions, and referring to the new vocabulary introduced by the teacher allowed the students to grasp the meaning of the report. In the post-listening stage, the students were asked to discuss questions such as “In your opinion, should the U.S. involve itself with wars happening in other countries? What do you think is the biggest problem our world is facing right now?” The students split into small groups of three to four learners and discussed their responses. By listening to the news report on world issues the students were motivated to practice English; their reactions and responses made it evident that they were practicing listening comprehension. They were able to understand the news report and make connections to their own opinions.

- Literacy Connection

Listening to a news report guided by the steps presented above includes literacy development activities such as vocabulary learning, exposure to a variety of speech patterns, intonation, and accents, as well as practicing note taking, comprehending questions, reading authentic text, and engaging in dialogue.

3.3. Poems and Songs

Poems and songs have repetitive structures and exposure to the same words in a catchy way reinforces learning. In addition, songs and poems are fun and engaging, which can motivate language learners to practice

listening, writing, and speaking more frequently and to enjoy learning. The following is a description of how to use poems and songs to practice listening as a process and the connection to literacy development (see Table 2).

Table 2. Listening to poems and songs.

Pre-listening (Planning)	Listening (Monitoring)	Post-listening evaluating	Literacy connection
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teach vocabulary words • Predict what the poem or song is about • Clarify how the learner will engage with the material 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Play the material several times • Provide printed version of material (Alternatively, a version with key words missing) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask comprehension questions • Ask volunteers to read the poem or sing the song 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning as culturally relevant practice

- Pre-Listening

Teach vocabulary words. To start the lesson, ask students if they listen to songs or if they enjoy reading poetry. Activate prior knowledge by making the students guess what the poem or song is about based on the title. Clarify the listening task; explain how they will engage with the material. For example, provide the students with guided questions that they need to answer after the poem or song is played: Who is speaking in the poem? How do they feel? What is the message of this song? What is the mood (e.g., happy, sad, or angry)? Establishing the task clarifies expectations and reduces anxiety for the learners.

- Listening

Listen to a poem or song at least two times. The goal of the first instance is to set the overall meaning or the mood. The second and third instances focus more on the specific details such as the questions provided before listening. Alternatively, provide students with a printed version of the poem or song with keywords missing. As the students listen, their task is to fill in the blanks.

- Post-Listening

Ask comprehension questions as a jumping point for class discussion. Promoting this type of reflection encourages deeper engagement with the text. Highlight different poem stanzas or verses and ask the students “what does the author mean in this stanza or verse?” Lastly, ask for volunteers to read the poem aloud, and have them write an original stanza to provide a different ending to the poem.

- Classroom Example

To begin the activity, students in the ESL class were asked if they liked poetry and what their favorite poems were. The poem that was selected for the class was “The Unwritten Letter from my Immigrant Parent” by Muna Abdulahi. Then, the students were asked what they thought the poem was about. Some said it was about the relationships of families with immigrant backgrounds. Next, they were given the questions mentioned in the pre-listening stage. Their task was to answer these questions as they listened to the poem. The instructor reduced the speed of the audio clip and played it three times. Students answered the guide questions after the third listen. Most students engaged in discussing their answers; they shared their own experiences and challenges being immigrant parents in the United States. One student said emotionally, “This is me. This is my story.” Next, the instructor asked some new questions like “What are the issues or challenges that immigrants face today mentioned in the poem?” and “If you were going to give this poem a new title, what would it be?” To conclude the activity, the

instructor provided a written copy of the poem so that the students were able to listen to it one more time following the written text. Lastly, the instructor asked volunteers to read the poem aloud.

- Literacy Connection

Listening to songs and poems makes learning the target language more culturally relevant and memorable. It helps the learners develop better listening skills as they become familiar with new words and cultural ideas (Tasnim, 2022) through repetition.

3.4. Commercials and Advertisement

Commercials and advertisements use authentic language and reflect cultural trends that provide insight into cultural values associated with the target language. Ads are designed to be memorable, thus they can help learners improve their listening comprehension as well as other language skills. Many ads include different accents which exposes beginner learners to English language variation in pronunciation and vocabulary usage. The following is a description of how to use commercials and advertisements to practice listening as a process and the connection to literacy development (see Table 3).

Table 3. Listening to commercials and advertisements.

Pre-listening (Planning)	Listening (Monitoring)	Post-listening evaluating	Literacy connection
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review key words and phrases that they will hear in the ad, especially slang or colloquial language. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Play the ad several times • Reduce the speed of the audio clip • Provide the learners with a transcript of the ad with some missing words to fill in the blanks • Play the ad at a normal speed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss with the learners whether the ad was effective. • Create their own ad to sell a product or service 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practice real-world language • Critical analysis of commercials • Practice the understanding of subtext and language imagery

- Pre-Listening

Use ads that are appropriate for the learners' levels. Choose products or themes that are relatable to the learners like travel, food, or sales events. Select ads that are no more than 60 seconds long so the learners can stay focused. Review key words and phrases that they will hear in the ad, especially slang or colloquial language. Pre-teaching relevant vocabulary words is an important step.

- Listening

Play the ad at least three times. Most ads are extremely fast, so reduce the speed of the audio clip when playing it for the first time. Ask the learners to describe the product or service being advertised. On the second listening time, ask about specific information heard on the ad. For example, according to the ad, how much can *Geico* save you on your car insurance? Why is *O'Reilly Auto Parts* having a sale this weekend? On the third listen, give the learners a transcript of the ad with some missing words to fill in the blanks, then check for correct answers. Lastly, play the ad at a normal speed to allow the learners to gain a sense of the language, intonation, and speed.

- Post-Listening

Ads use persuasion techniques and persuasive language. Discuss with the learners whether the ad was effective. Ask them questions like: What would make you want to buy this product? What would you change in the ad to make it more effective? For higher level learners, ask them to create their own ad to sell a product or service, and ask them to use some of the language they heard on the original ad.

- Classroom Example

Learners in the adult ESL class were provided with the vocabulary words: destination, crispy, avoid, appreciation, and luxurious before listening to six selected commercials. These audio clips were normally 60 seconds long. However, the instructor reduced their speed when playing for the students. One of the commercials was a sales ad from Lowe’s. After the first listen, the instructor asked what store was being advertised. A student answered, “This is Lowe’s. He is like my husband. Every man is happy with new tools”. After the second listen, a multiple-choice type of question was asked by the instructor: “In this commercial they said that, *Your new project needs new* _____. Is it a) ideas, b) people, c) tools, or d) hobbies?”. Many students answered either a) ideas or d) hobbies. The instructor played the audio clip one more time to confirm the correct answer which was d) hobbies. After all the commercials were played, the instructor asked the class to choose the most effective commercial and to explain why. At the end of the activity, one student made a comment: “Many times, the advertisements are very fast to listen to, but this is a fun and interesting way to learn English.”

- Literacy Connection

Commercials and advertisements provide learners with practical exposure to English language used in the real-world. Analyzing commercials and ads encourages them to think deeply about the message and intent of the advertisement. Thus, listening to these materials allows them to enhance their practical language skills and practice the understanding of subtext and language imagery.

3.5. Children’s Literature

Adult language learners can sometimes be intimidated by advanced texts. Children’s literature such as fairy tales and fables deals with universal themes like friendship, love, beauty, family, and adventure which adult learners can also relate to and enjoy. The following is a description of how to use children’s literature to practice listening as a process and the connection to literacy development (see Table 4).

Table 4. Listening to children’s literature.

Pre-listening (Planning)	Listening (Monitoring)	Post-listening evaluating	Literacy connection
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teach vocabulary words • Provide the students with the title and a picture and have them predict what the story is about. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listen to the story several times • Pause the audio clip at certain points in the story and ask simple questions. • Encourage learners to imagine the scenes of the story or draw what they hear. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Task students to put pictures from the story in order • Co-write the story with their classmates using the pictures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessible language • Further enjoyment of stories • Enhanced focus, memory, and imagination

- Pre-Listening

Teach vocabulary words explicitly. Provide the students with the title and a picture and have them predict what the story is about. In the story *The Ant and the Grasshopper* for example, after showing them the title and the cover of the book, ask the students if they are familiar with the story and/or if they have read it in their native language. This will make the learners feel more prepared while listening to the story.

- Listening

Listen to the story at least two times. Pause the audio clip at certain points in the story and ask simple questions. What do you think is going to happen now? How would you describe this character? Encourage learners to imagine the scenes of the story or draw what they hear.

- Post-Listening

Provide students with pictures from the story that are out-of-order. Pictures can be either printed and shown on the board or projected on screen. In remote classes, pictures can be displayed on an online platform such as *Padlet*. The task is for the learners to describe what is happening in the pictures and put them in the correct order based on the story that they have heard. This activity can be done by the whole class or in small groups. The goal is to co-write the story with their classmates, which involves negotiating and sharing opinions with their peers.

- Classroom Example

The story selected for the activity was *The Ant and the Grasshopper*. To activate the ESL learners' prior knowledge, the instructor asked them to predict what the story was about. They were also asked to visualize, take notes, and draw while listening to the story. The audio clip was played two times, the first listen without any pauses. On the second listen, the instructor paused the clip during parts of the story to ask the learners several questions like, *What do you think of Grasshopper? How would you describe him? What do you think is going to happen to Ant and his family in the winter? Are you more like Ant who works hard or Grasshopper who likes to relax and enjoy?* After the second listen, the students were provided with pictures depicting scenes from the story. These pictures were out of sequence, and the students' task was to put them in the correct order and rewrite the story based on what they heard. The instructor facilitated writing the story with the class. After the activity, a student described their experience, "This story is fun and gives us a good lesson in life. I enjoyed writing the story with my classmates; it was memorable."

- Literacy Connection

Children's literature uses basic words and simple sentence structures which are accessible to the learners. Therefore, learners can enjoy these stories without getting intimidated by the text. Visualizing the scenes from these stories is an important part of learning because it enhances focus and imagination, understanding, and memory retention.

3.6. Financial Literature

Understanding financial concepts improves learners' confidence in handling financial transactions and supports them in securing a favorable financial future. Teaching content related to personal finances through listening requires activities focusing on new vocabulary learning and application such as those described here. Listening to and discussing financial concepts creates room for learning about this complex adult life aspect. The following is a

description of how to use financial literature to practice listening as a process and the connection to literacy development (see Table 5).

Table 5. Listening to financial literature.

Pre-listening (Planning)	Listening (Monitoring)	Post-listening evaluating	Literacy connection
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Introduce key financial vocabulary words ● Use graphic organizers and note-taking tools such as charts or tables 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Play the clip several times ● Task students to take notes on main ideas and relevant details. ● Provide a handout by asking specific questions or presenting a variety of exercises ● Re-listen to important parts of the content several times 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Reinforce the lesson through problem-solving activities appropriate to the learners' English language level. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Informed financial decisions ● Encourages critical thinking ● Practice language and numeracy

- Pre-Listening

Choose a simple audio clip or a financial literacy podcast episode. Introduce key financial vocabulary words such as interest rate, cost, budget, or checking account. Define these words, provide examples and include simple sentences. Use graphic organizers and note-taking tools such as charts or tables to help the learners identify and organize information during listening.

- Listening

Play the selected audio clip several times. Task students to take notes on main ideas and relevant details. Provide a handout asking specific questions or presenting a variety of exercises such as multiple choice, True/False, or a matching information activity. For example, prepare a matching exercise where column A lists financial literacy concepts and column B has definitions of these concepts. Use the same language and vocabulary presented in the audio. Re-listen to important parts of the content several times to make sure that the listeners grasp the definitions.

- Post-Listening

Reinforce the learners' new knowledge through problem-solving activities appropriate to the learners' English language level. When teaching U.S. denominations for example, ask "A penny plus a nickel equals?" or "Two dimes and two quarters is equal to?" In addition, a matching exercise may be used to double check for comprehension of new concepts related to personal finances and a budgeting game can help practice problem solving skills as well as the application of financial literacy concepts.

- Classroom Example

The ESL students received a graphic organizer to answer questions in preparation for an audio clip on "All About Money" from *Readworks*, a free online repository of articles for reading comprehension. Thus, the graphic organizer had fill-in the blank sentences such as "a place that keeps money safe is _____." "Ten cents is also called _____." The instructor discussed the responses to these questions to clarify doubts about vocabulary words. Next, the students listened to the audio clip several times to complete a matching exercise identifying the definitions of financial literacy concepts. Then, the students volunteered to provide answers. Lastly, for the post-listening step, the students played a budgeting game where they were expected to distribute a symbolic amount of

money to pay for home and personal expenses. Once the students are finished distributing the budget, there is a discussion on financial decisions and priorities.

- Literacy Connection

When integrating financial concepts with language learning, the learners are also empowered to make informed financial decisions as well as ask relevant questions. It encourages critical thinking to evaluate information and understand financial risks. This helps learners to practice both language and numeracy skills related to real-life situations.

4. DISCUSSION

It is important to teach and practice the different language skills as integrated. As [Newton and Nation \(2021\)](#) explain, one-way listening is transactional and focuses on the transfer of information; two-way listening is interactional and is associated with maintaining social relations. The latter is a more contemporary view of listening and requires the listener to be an active learner. Similar to the examples provided in this article, Newton and Nation describe listening strategies and activities that promote group work aiming to make listening easier. For example, they suggest listening while reading, repeated listening, interactive listening, and non-linguistic or semi-linguistic support through pictures, diagrams, objects, and PowerPoints ([Newton & Nation, 2021](#)). They further explain listening as a process where interaction is required at times and occasions where other language supports are needed such as reading a script, using visual supports, or repetition, and control of the speed of a recording.

Like other language skills, the work of the listener can become easier by activating prior knowledge and by having a clear purpose for listening ([Brown & Lee, 2015](#); [Newton & Nation, 2021](#); [Nguyen & Abbott, 2016](#)). To this end, the present article described examples for the teaching of listening as a process following pre-listening, listening, and post-listening steps while using a variety of text genres such as news reports, poems and songs, commercials and advertisement, children's literature, and financial literature. Listening to and reading the news to stay informed are natural daily life activities in the lives of adults. This is an authentic activity to practice listening comprehension and promote literacy development. Similarly, listening to songs and poetry is an enjoyable, dynamic, and effective strategy to learn the English language. Because of the rhythm and melody of songs and the structured form of poems, learners easily recall new words, expressions, and cultural ideas. In addition, children's stories are written in a language that is not overly demanding and thus, they are not daunting for learners. In other words, using children's literature provides accessible learning for beginners which can build foundational language skills. Listening to content related to personal finances is important for language learners to discuss issues related to managing money and other financial concepts. This knowledge helps the learners navigate their host country's financial system, which can be starkly different from what they know from their country of origin's financial system. Lastly, listening to commercials and advertisements allows the learners to practice listening to different accents and language variations, as well as learning about culture. Commercials and advertisements use authentic everyday language useful when fulfilling needs and adult life experiences outside the classroom. Listening to ads and analyzing how they use language to persuade the consumer allows language learners to examine the subtext and imagery to create emotion and transmit messages that are effective.

Defining the genre, its features and functions can make the listening process more meaningful for language learners and can be an appropriate pre-listening activity ([Sadeghi, Hassani, & Noory, 2014](#)). Studying the impact that using different genres can have on listening, a study by [Sadeghi et al. \(2014\)](#) found that the treatment group (23 learners) outperformed the control group (22 learners) on the listening comprehension post-test after receiving

12 sessions of genre-based listening input. The control group had the same number of sessions, but the genres were presented in random order and without any introduction to genres and their description. Thus, Sadeghi et al. (2014) discovered that explicit teaching of the genre makes a positive difference in learner listening performance.

5. CONCLUSION

Exposure to listening to a variety of text genres enriches the learner's ability to use language meaningfully and contextually. It develops listening comprehension by allowing the learner to gain understanding of language in the broader context of the human experience. Listening to different text genres also assists language learners in understanding tone and emotion, recognizing shifts in mood, detecting sarcasm, and identifying a variety of emotions. By listening to poems and songs for example, learners can comprehend the underlying emotions and intentions behind the language and not just their literal meaning. Different text genres reflect the host society's values and emotions at the time it was produced. Listening to different text genres allows language learners to gain a better understanding of the target culture along with its history and social norms, among other benefits.

Practicing listening with news reports, poems and songs, commercials and advertisements, children's literature, and financial literature motivated the learners to approach the practice of listening as a process. In addition, the use of these different genres supported the learners in acquiring strategies to address what makes listening difficult (e.g., clustering, redundancy, reduced forms, performance variables, colloquial language, rate of delivery, stress, rhythm, and intonation, interaction, and variety of accents). For example, by listening to news reports the learners were exposed to characteristics of spoken language that make listening difficult such as clustering, reduced forms, colloquial language, and rate of delivery. In particular, through commercials and advertisements, English learners listen to spoken language that involves a variety of accents and interactions in different contexts.

The text genres discussed in this article illustrate the different reasons why developing listening can be a daunting task or an enjoyable activity in the language classroom. The article is an invitation to ELT instructors to be strategic and intentional when teaching listening comprehension to adult learners. Instructors must be aware of what makes listening a difficult task for language learners. The practice of listening as a process coupled with the use of a variety of text genres encourages reflection and deeper engagement with the message and text making the connections between listening practice and literacy development readily evident.

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