

ADVENTURES IN INTERCULTURAL LISTENING

By

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
I. INTRODUCTION.....	1
II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE.....	7
A Metaphorical Definition of Listening Comprehension.....	8
Listening as a Guessing Game.....	11
Listening as a Network.....	13
Listening as Construction.....	15
Listening as Script.....	17
Evaluating the Metaphors.....	19
A Description of Intercultural Listening.....	21
Roles of the Intercultural Listener.....	23
Settings and Purpose.....	25
Challenges and Strategies in Intercultural Listening.....	30
Research Questions.....	50
III. METHODOLOGY.....	52
Recruiting Intercultural Listeners.....	55
Linguistic Experience.....	56
Drive to Identify with the Culture.....	57
Language Learning Situation.....	58
Diaries & Data Sources.....	62
Data Analysis.....	64
Step 1: Identify Roles.....	66
Step 2: Identify the Purpose.....	69
Step 3: Extrapolate Challenges and Strategies.....	71
Step 4: Interpolate Challenges and Strategies.....	74
Exploratory Questions.....	75
IV. FINDINGS.....	77
Roles.....	77
Passive roles.....	79
Active roles.....	87
Contrasting Active and Passive Roles.....	90
Purposes.....	91
Transaction.....	92

Instruction	95
Social Interaction	96
The Effect of the Purpose of Interaction on Comprehension	99
Challenges.....	100
Difficulty.....	100
Cognitive Strategies	111
Sources of Dysphoria.....	133
Affective Strategies.....	141
Sources of Dissonance	149
Conclusion	159
Effect of Roles on Comprehension	160
Effect of Purpose on Comprehension	160
Common Challenges for Intercultural Listeners.....	162
Most Frequently Employed Strategies.....	164
V. CONCLUSION.....	169
What Teachers Should Know	169
Implications & Applications.....	176
Limitations and Extensions.....	181
REFERENCES	183
APPENDIX A.....	197
APPENDIX B.....	199

LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
Table 2.1 Difficulties and Cognitive Strategies	31
Table 2.2 Dysphoria and Affective Strategies	37
Table 3.1 Differentiating Listening Roles	66
Table 3.2 Differentiating Purpose.....	69
Table 3.3 Challenges and Strategies in Intercultural Listening	73
Table 4.1 Frequency of listening roles recorded in logs.....	78
Table 4.2 Frequency of listening episode according to purpose.....	92
Table 4.3 Challenges in the Cognitive Domain	101
Table 4.4 Cognitive Strategies	112
Table 4.5 Frequency of translation types	119
Table 4.6 Challenges in the affective domain.....	133
Table 4.7 Affective Strategies.....	142
Table 4.8 Socio-Cultural Strategies	150

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure	Page
Figure 1.1 Map of Intercultural Listening.....	6
Figure 3.1 Entry from Shadrach's Listening Log	71
Figure 3.2 Entry from Jonnie's Mandarin Listening Log.....	72

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Ten years ago, while I was picking up international students for an event that my church was sponsoring, I met a Japanese lady who did not fit the profile of the traditional student. In the ride from her house to the church, though we were constantly engaged in conversation for every moment of those ten minutes, she only understood and answered one question. I already knew her name; she had provided it when she called me to pick her up. I guessed from her appearance that she was in her early forties. The only new information that she could give me was that she was a student at the English Language Institute. If I were her teacher, I mused, what could I do to facilitate her listening comprehension?

That is where this adventure begins. Over the next six years, I learned the story of this lady whom I will call Aki and watched her progress. It was by no means stellar, but it was steady. For her, the language barrier was a formidable opponent, but she attacked it with the stealth and grace of a samurai. It was a difficult battle; she needed a miracle. I knew the kind of miracle many intercultural listeners wish for: a pill, a potion, a formula, or tongues of fire as those that fell upon the apostles. Within an instant the apostles could speak another language. Many intercultural listeners wish for and pray for this instantaneous gift of tongues. They want effortless fluency.

Aki's adventure is about a different kind of miracle. It is about the nitty-gritty of

trudging through endless marshes, weathering numerous storms, and emerging a survivor. Before returning to Japan, Aki managed to get through the English Language Institute and take a few classes at the community college. She never woke up fully bilingual in English and Japanese, but, through each day's trials, she woke up a little more fluent than she had been the day before and a little better equipped to function in the host culture.

What Aki needed, as do other recipients of the slow miracle of language acquisition, is someone to bask with them on balmy days, to sweat with them on stormy days, and to share floating debris when they are shipwrecked. Such companions do not necessarily need to know the terrain first-hand to offer grace and patience to the intercultural listeners who have entered their culture, but they should at least be familiar with the accounts of explorers who have been there. They should be aware of the storms and the obstacles that intercultural listeners encounter.

That is what this adventure is about. *Adventures in Intercultural Listening* is not about quick fixes or magic formulas. It is not about simplifying the process so that dummies could understand; in fact, language acquisition and cultural adaptation is not for dummies. This adventure is about engaging in the drudgery, plodding through trenches, scaling mountains, and exploring the territory of intercultural listening. It is about figuring out what people say and think in other languages and how they arrange their lives around those thoughts. More than that, *Adventures in Intercultural Listening* is about language teachers becoming intercultural listeners so they can gain a deeper understanding of the issues intercultural listeners face.

As language teachers, we have our own technical jargon. We differentiate

between English as a second language (ESL) and English as a foreign language (EFL). Some add a third category: English as an associative language (EAL). ESL refers to classes for those who study English in predominantly English-speaking environments such as the US, England, or Australia. EAL refers to classes for those who study English where the language of government is English but most other business is conducted in another language. EFL refers to classes for those whose only exposure to English is in the classroom. The implications of *Adventures in Intercultural Listening* are primarily for ESL students and other language learners who study in the host culture. The *intercultural* component implies that in addition to learning to listen to another language, the listener must also deal with issues of the other culture. Students who study English or any other language while living in their own culture do not deal with the intercultural aspects on such a grand scale.

Typically in ESL/EFL pedagogy, teachers and researchers speak of *target* languages. I have opted for the softer language of cultural anthropologists because their use of the terms *host* and *guest* imply a friendlier relationship. Hosting is preferable to being targeted. As violence escalates in our world, it seems advisable to think about our relationships with other cultures in less militant terms.

Figure 1.1 is a map of the adventure. In this study, two intercultural listeners explore intercultural listening, providing introspective evidence about the roles, purposes, the challenges and strategies of listening to a language that is not yet one's own. These two intercultural listeners will act as tour guides for the adventure, facilitating the exploration of four questions:

1. Does the intercultural listener's role as addressee, audience, observer, over-hearer, or participant in the discourse affect comprehension? If so, how?
2. Is intercultural listening different when listening for different purposes such as social interaction, transaction, and instruction? If so, how is it different?
3. What are the cognitive, affective, and socio-cultural challenges that intercultural listeners encounter?
4. How do intercultural listeners respond to these challenges? What strategies do they use to meet those challenges?

Chapter 2 explores exactly what intercultural listening entails, extensively considering four metaphors implied by current research in communication and language education. The focus will narrow to the metaphor of the script, using the elements that are critical both for describing the listening process and for scripts: roles, purposes, and challenges and strategies for meeting those challenges. These four elements will be circulated through the remaining four chapters. Chapter 2 plots the adventure, defining the roles and purposes of listening for other intercultural listeners and introducing three abstract settings for intercultural listening: the cognitive domain, the affective domain, and the socio-cultural domain. Using empirical studies and other current research, Chapter 2 examines the types of challenges intercultural listeners face and demonstrates how intercultural listeners meet these challenges.

The last three chapters blend the discoveries of Chapter 2 with the personal experience of two intercultural listeners. Chapter 3 narrates the recruitment of intercultural listeners, the collection of their listening logs, and the methods of coding and analyzing intercultural listening episodes, proposing the extrapolation of challenges and

strategies from the listening logs of two intercultural listeners as well as the interpolation of the challenges and strategies suggested in Chapter 2 into those logs. Chapter 4 summarizes and analyzes both extrapolated and interpolated themes, exploring the influences of the listener's role and purpose for listening on his or her comprehension of the host language. Chapter 4 also explores the challenges that these two intercultural listeners encountered, investigates the strategies they used to meet those challenges, and discusses the implications of such challenges and strategies for other intercultural listeners. Chapter 5 recaps and debriefs the adventures in intercultural listening, summarizing the discoveries and surmising the implications and applications of such discoveries for the ESL classroom, concluding with a discussion of the limitations of this study and suggestions for further adventures in listening comprehension.

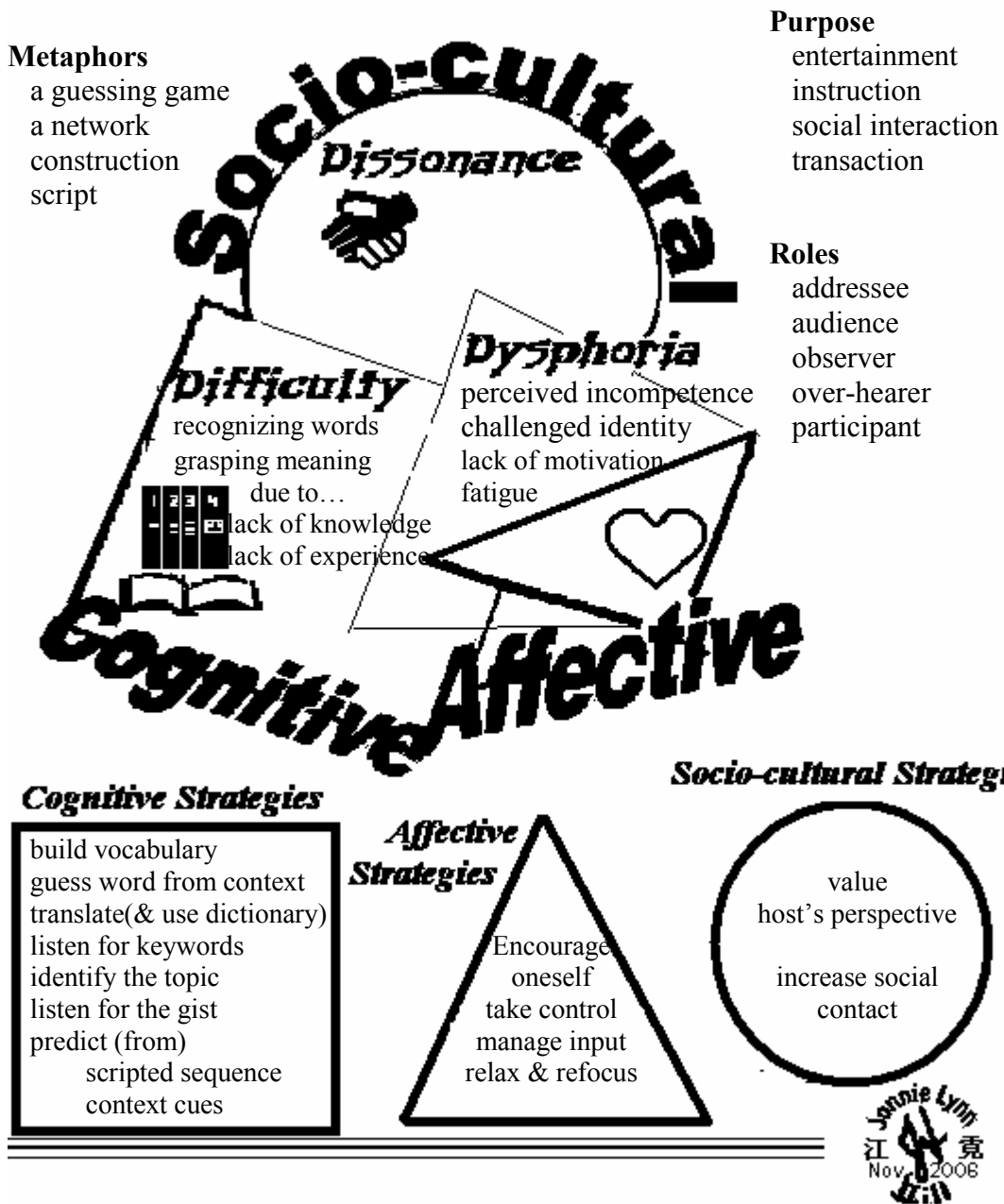


Figure 1.1 Map of Intercultural Listening

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Many think of listening comprehension as a percentage of words understood, thus equating word recognition with understanding. According to such logic, if a listener recognizes 100% of the words in an utterance, he should be able to understand the entire utterance. If one could calculate the percentage of words recognized in a spoken text, would a percentage be an adequate means of assessing comprehension?

Consider Amelia Bedelia, the maid of a children's story book (Parish, 1963). She understood one-hundred percent of the words on the list of tasks she was given to do, but interpreted the words very differently from what her employer intended. For example, when asked to "draw the drapes when the sun comes in" (p. 25) Amelia got out a pencil and paper and drew a picture of the drapes. She was confused when, rather than praising her artistic ability, her employer scolded her about letting the furniture fade. From this contrived, humorous example, we see that even when a person does understand one hundred percent of the text, the inferences and interpretations involved in comprehension can yield very different understandings.

From this example, we may infer that the central question to be asked of the listener is not "How much did you understand?" or "How many words did you know?" but "What exactly did you understand?" A listener like Amelia Bedelia may understand all of the words, yet misunderstand the message entirely. By the same token, a listener may understand fewer than half the words, but from that meager pool of words and a few

inferences, figure out what the speaker is saying. Because listening involves more than just recognizing words, listeners, in addition to increasing their facility in word recognition, must determine what they need in order to increase the quality of their understanding so that, in a situation such as Amelia Bedelia's, the understanding they construct will closely resemble that which the messenger wishes to convey. When the *what exactly* the listener understands matches *exactly what* the speaker wants to convey, communication is most effective. Achieving such a match, as many, if not all listeners have experienced, is an ambitious goal.

This dissertation explores, analyzes and discusses the adventures of intercultural listeners who strive and sometimes succeed in making the match. Before analyzing these adventures, one must have the tools for interpretation. In this chapter, we will first explore the definition of listening and then examine what other studies propose concerning who intercultural listeners are, where and why they listen, the sources of challenges they encounter, and the strategies they use to meet those challenges.

A Metaphorical Definition of Listening Comprehension

What is listening comprehension like? To what can the process be compared? Folk theories might compare listening comprehension to a tape recorder. Listeners capture sounds and record them in their brain. This analogy, however, breaks down almost immediately. A tape recorder will capture sounds more or less the way they occur, but efficient listeners are able to filter out extraneous background noise. Less efficient listeners, particularly those listening to an unfamiliar language, may not be able to capture the sounds efficiently, nor make sense of all the sounds that they hear. Thus, as Anderson and Lynch (1988) point out, and as most listeners can articulate, the analogy of

the listening process as a tape recorder is woefully inadequate. Efficiency in listening is more than just being quick enough to efficiently capture all the sounds.

Other folk theories compare listening comprehension to espionage: the listener detects encoded sounds and must decipher them. This analogy is useful, particularly in foreign language listening, in that it highlights the importance of training listeners to adapt strategies to increase their proficiency in code-breaking. Following this line of logic, those with efficient decoding capacities would be excellent listeners and miscommunication would seldom occur. However, even among native speakers, an environment in which such efficiency in aural decoding is most likely to exist, there are misunderstandings. This suggests that listening comprehension involves more than just agility in breaking the aural code.

Some have proposed that a more critical aspect of listening comprehension than code-breaking is memory. They suggest that our memories play a significant role in comprehension (Brown, 1995; Carrell, 1985, 1988; Eskey, 1985; Stevick, 2001). Brown (1995) suggests that a listener is like a secretary. When the listener hears the speaker's ideas, like a secretary, he searches his memory for similar files that contain similar information, trying to relate the new information gleaned in the speaker's ideas with information that he already has. The listener-secretary compares the file from memory with the file that contains the speakers' ideas, cross-references them or creates a new file, then files the information in memory for future reference and use.

A similar metaphor is proposed by Stevick (2001). In this metaphor, the messages we hear are like documents piled on top of the desk to be sorted and filed and even cross-referenced with other documents. In sorting files, the listeners compare the information of

the current file with information in previous files; if they find discrepancies, they adjust the files until they agree. These office analogies are useful in that they explain why a listener like Amelia Bedelia would hear the same message other employers give their maids, and yet come up with a very different understanding of what she was supposed to do: Amelia's files simply did not contain the same information. However, the analogy of the listening process as filing is still woefully inadequate as a comprehensive model of intercultural listening.

An adequate model of listening comprehension should do four things: focus on *exactly what* rather than *how much* the intercultural listener understands, explain sources of adequate as well as inadequate comprehension both for listening and cultural adaptation, suggest strategies for addressing the issues of inadequate comprehension, and have a specific orientation toward intercultural listening. Although the folk theories appeal to listeners and minimally imply a source of inadequate comprehension, the metaphor of the tape recorder does not suggest any strategies that the intercultural listener could use to clean up the recording. Neither does it say anything of the intercultural complications involved.

The file metaphor fares a little better, but lends itself to thinking of the listening process in terms of *how much*—how much information is in the listener's files—rather than *exactly what* the intercultural listener has comprehended. This metaphor may focus on the listeners' processing of information, but compares it with general information processing rather than with the specific representation that the speaker intends for the listener to interpret. Four metaphors that focus on *exactly what* the listener has understood in light of the representation shaped by the speaker are those of listening as a

guessing game, listening as networking, listening as construction, and listening as script.

Listening as a Guessing Game

Some would find the metaphor of listening as a guessing game appealing. Although it originated as a theory of reading comprehension, because of its focus on the process of comprehension, some of the most basic principles of Kenneth Goodman's (1967, 1988) "Psycholinguistic Guessing Game" can be applied to listening. Goodman described comprehension as a game with four steps in which the reader assigns meanings to the individual words on the page, makes predictions about how the argument will be developed or what will happen next based on the meaning he has assigned to the words and his knowledge of the topic, confirms the prediction, then terminates the activity. In confirming predictions, if the reader finds his prediction is true, he will continue to read, making new predictions concerning the remainder of the text. If his prediction or a part of his prediction is false, he will revise the prediction. At any time, the reader may jump to the fourth step, simply by not reading anymore.

Listeners, too, assign meaning to words, predict, confirm predictions, and exit from the process simply by not listening anymore. The ramifications of their exit, however, are much more significant. Whereas readers can return to the text at any time, picking up where they left off or backing up to something they did not quite understand, listeners do not have this luxury. Sometimes, they do not have the right to ask the speaker to repeat the discourse; even when they do ask the speaker or someone else to repeat what was said, it will not necessarily be exactly what was said.

The guessing game gives a simple, natural way of seeing the process, but it does not incorporate all the necessary elements of adequate comprehension. Yetta Goodman

and Carolyn Burke (1980) incorporated another step in the game after the confirmation of prediction: integration of new knowledge with previously acquired knowledge. They describe the process in this way: First, the reader uses cues in the text to decide which letter, word, or idea will come next. These cues may be based on the content or the format of the text. Next, the reader confirms or rejects the predictions. If the prediction can be confirmed, the reader integrates knowledge into memory. The psycholinguistic guessing game explains the role of decoding and making inferences, highlighting the two major challenges in the cognitive domain: decoding and inference. However, the guessing game metaphor is much too linear (Wilson & Sperber 2003) and too simplistic in and of itself.

When comprehending, the listener does not go from step one to step two to step three to step four, but simultaneously decodes, infers, and integrates knowledge (Wilson & Sperber, 2003). These processes are interactive (Anderson & Pearson, 1988; Carrell & Eisterhold, 1988; Eskey, 1988; Rost, 2002). Interactive theory and schema theory propose that listeners are involved in bottom-up processes of decoding and top-down processes of activating knowledge or schema concerning propositions in the text.

Cultural knowledge is important to both listeners and readers. Proponents of Schema theory have considered how culture influences comprehension. Carrell (1987) and Reynolds, Taylor, Steffenson, Shirey, & Anderson (1982) found that readers' cultural knowledge influenced the way they interpreted the text. Carrell (1988) found that second language readers who relied heavily on the bottom-up processes did not understand as thoroughly as those who used both bottom-up and top-down processes.

Schema theory appeals to researchers and has formed the framework for a number

of studies in EFL listening comprehension. For example, in their study of EFL listeners in Hong Kong, Tsui and Fullilove (1998) suggest that both top-down and bottom-up processes are critical for those listening to EFL. The better listeners used top-down strategies more efficiently. These listeners also had greater facility in bottom-up processing; their fluency in word recognition allowed them to have a better global understanding of the passages they heard on the National English Exam. Schnell (1992) also used schema theory as a theoretical framework to confirm that EFL listeners in China, like the readers in Carrell's (1988) study, often get stuck in bottom-up processes.

Listening as a Network

Some researchers have borrowed from schema theory, but instead of portraying comprehension as a guessing game, the metaphor implied by their research evokes the imagery of a network. In contrast to the up-down orientation of Schema Theory, the network metaphor implies a lateral orientation, linking concepts and ideas, forming a network from among those links of what has been said and the intercultural listener's prior knowledge of the topic (Mendelsohn, 1994, p.55). Rost's (1990, 2002) characterization of the listening process proposes that the listener makes several types of links: links of words that he hears with his knowledge of the linguistic system to estimate the sense of a referent, links of propositions in the text and general knowledge to form a base meaning of the message the speaker is constructing, and links of knowledge about the speaker and knowledge about how various messages are conveyed in discourse to construct a representation of what the speaker means.

The network metaphor supplies a means for visualizing not only adequate comprehension, but also two types of inadequate comprehension. In adequate

comprehension the listener activates all the appropriate links needed to understand the message the speaker is conveying. One type of inadequate comprehension, misunderstanding, occurs when there is a mismatch between the knowledge that the speaker invokes and the knowledge the listener retrieves. In misunderstanding, the listener activates the wrong links. A second type of inadequate comprehension, non-comprehension, occurs when the speaker invokes knowledge that the listener does not have; an important link is missing.

The network metaphor has been applied in a variety of research settings. The most direct link of the network metaphor with intercultural listening is that of Kelly (1991). Kelly (1991) asserts that non-understanding occurs in adult intercultural listeners because of a paucity of linguistic knowledge and a lack of ability to apply it when estimating the sense of the referents.

The networking metaphor has been implied by research concerning language learning and affect. According to Stevick (1999), a new experience is broken into thousands of small detailed items encoded according to sensory perception, time, purpose, and emotion. Each of these details connects with similar details gleaned during previous experiences, forming networks of details. The new experiences strengthen or weaken previous connections. Stevick suggests that the networks are not only influenced by the listener's emotions, but, in fact, are quite likely organized around them. This research is indirectly associated with intercultural listening because of affect's influence not only on the process of listening and comprehending, but also on cultural adaptation.

In addition to cognitive processes and affective experiences in listening, the network metaphor is also implied in research which links verbal and non-verbal

communication. Sperber and Wilson (1986) suggest that, in addition to simultaneously breaking the aural code, guessing the speaker's meaning, predicting, and integrating the new information gleaned from linguistic cues, listeners also link information from paralinguistic cues. They propose that eye gaze, posture, tone of voice and gestures are an integral part of communication. Research by Bavelas, Coates, and Johnson (2002) affirms this proposal, demonstrating that American listeners process eye gaze and verbal messages simultaneously. Research in intercultural communication suggests that eye gaze and other non-verbal communication may be interpreted in different ways across cultures (Hofstede & Pederson, 1999; Flowerdew & Miller, 2005), which both affirms that listening involves the networking of at least two simultaneous communicative processes and, at the same time, suggests the possibility of clashes of interpretation.

Listening as Construction

Some see listeners as builders. They employ words such as *building*, *scaffolding*, *construction*, *foundation*, and *framework*, particularly in their explanations of how to increase efficiency in listening. Anderson and Lynch (1988), Buck (2001), and Gernsbacher (1997) are four such researchers.

Anderson and Lynch (1988) characterize the listener as an active model builder. They like the term *mental model* because it “emphasizes the constructive (i.e. active) and personal nature of successful listening” (p.11). They describe the model as a combination of a representation of what the listener has heard with facts and knowledge the listener possesses concerning the specific situation, culture, society, and the world in general.

Buck (2001) also uses the metaphor of a mental model, describing the model as

“the meaning of a text [being] built up in memory” (p.27). Two structures are built: a textbase and a situational model. The textbase represents the propositions in the discourse. The situational model represents the listener’s interpretation of the discourse. Because the models are not a complete representation of what is heard, the listener constantly updates and revises them.

Whereas Anderson & Lynch and Buck focus on the product of construction, Gernsbacher (1997) focuses on the process. She suggests that, in general, comprehension has three stages: laying the foundation, mapping information onto the foundation, and shifting to build new substructures. In laying a foundation for comprehension, the listener decides which type of informational structure in previous experience best matches that of the current discourse. Gernsbacher compares mapping information onto the foundation with making a sculpture of papier- mâché:

According to the Structure Building Framework, once a foundation is laid, incoming information that coheres with previous information is mapped onto the developing structure or substructure. I envision mapping as something like creating an object out of papier-mâché. Each strip of papier- mâché is attached to the developing object, augmenting it. Appendages can be built, layer by layer. Comprehenders build mental structures in a similar way. Each piece of incoming information can be mapped onto a developing structure to augment it, and new substructures (like appendages) are built in the same way. (p. 269)

The process focus of comprehension allows for a description of how and why inadequate comprehension occurs. Gernsbacher proposes that comprehension is enabled through two processes in which the building blocks, or memory nodes, are either

suppressed or enhanced. When the listener decides that the information in a particular memory node is not needed for interpretation, the memory node is suppressed; no building blocks will be added to the structure. If the information in the memory node is needed to interpret the discourse, the node is enhanced and a place is made for new building blocks to be added to the structure. When the memory nodes of a particular structure are all suppressed, the listener will shift to build another structure that more closely resembles the stream of discourse. According to Gernsbacher, less efficient listeners (or readers) are unable to sufficiently suppress memory nodes. When the discourse presents new information, rather than relating it to a structure that has already been started, inefficient listeners built a new substructure, often before information has been sufficiently mapped onto the foundation.

ESL teachers may find this metaphor quite appealing. They may refer to *building vocabulary* or *laying a foundation* that would enable the intercultural listener to understand various concepts. However, current research in intercultural listening that specifically investigates this metaphor is scarce.

Listening as Script

A metaphor that has been used to venture into an exploration of both the cognitive and social aspects of intercultural listening characterizes listening as script. The central component of this metaphor is a script. Fisher and Smith (1977) describe a script as a skeletal representation of repeated experiences. The similarities across the experiences are stored together in memory. When new information is received, the script is retrieved and the new information assimilated into it. This process involves an analysis of how the information fits into the processor's script. The more closely the information resembles

information that is already in the script, the more easily it is assimilated into knowledge. Anderson and Lynch (1988) propose “The idea of a mental script is a powerful one; it offers a plausible explanation of how the mass of memories of individual experience may be organized into networks of connected knowledge” (p. 14).

The script metaphor has proven useful for research in the listening process. Slackman and Hudson (1984) provide experimental evidence for the presence of scripts. In interviews with preschoolers, they found that young American children can predict what will happen in familiar situations, such as birthday parties and going to a fast food restaurant. Their ability to predict what types of things a person would order at a fast food restaurant indicates the use of scripts to organize information.

In the last decade, this metaphor has gained popularity in the arena of anthropological linguistics and language acquisition and has achieved an intimate bond of the cultural and cognitive aspects of listening that none of the other metaphors has been able to do. Agar (1994), Buck (2001), and Flowerdew and Miller (2005) have proposed the components of scripts and how they are used during listening comprehension.

According to Agar (1994), a script sets a boundary around the details it contains and gives them identity. For example, tables, chairs, menus, and wallets are all a part of a restaurant script for most Americans. Agar’s proposition implies that when the boundaries and details of the speaker’s script are similar to those of the listener (i.e. both consider tables, chairs, menus, and wallets a part of the script for restaurants), the listener is able to create a more accurate representation of the speaker’s message.

The script metaphor is indeed a powerful one for understanding intercultural listening comprehension because it highlights that which can serve as barrier or bridge:

different cultures incorporate different expectations into their scripts. Chinese, Japanese, and Korean restaurant scripts would include chopsticks among the props, but not necessarily silverware, even for a formal dinner. In fast food restaurants, Americans may not use either. In all restaurants, Americans expect to find napkins; Chinese often bring their own. The American script generally has a clause about who pays the tip (one that Agar points out is often debated), but for actors in a restaurant script in China, this is not an expectation at all since there is no tip. This highlights a point that Buck (2001) makes: scripts are culture bound.

Inadequate comprehension in intercultural listening occurs because listeners have not yet been sensitized to the way in which the host categorizes information within scripts. Watson-Gegeo (2004) observed that many categories of concepts are socio-culturally constructed and therefore vary cross-culturally. Aitchison's (1994) research suggests that categories may differ, not only across cultures, but even across different age groups within a culture. When asked which vegetable was the best example of a vegetable, Aitchison found that Germans responded, *cabbage*; British adolescents, *potatoes*; British adults, *carrots*. These studies imply that intercultural listeners may misinterpret their host's meaning not only because the information in the script may be different, but also because it may be organized differently.

Evaluating the Metaphors

These four metaphors have shown various processes that focus on how the listener achieves or does not achieve a representation of the host's message that accurately resembles that which the host intended to convey. Several reasons for inaccuracy have been suggested. According to the guessing game metaphor, listeners

may focus too closely on the words to which they cannot assign meaning, and never engage in conceptually driven process, prediction, or integrating what they have heard with what they know. According to the networking metaphor, the listener may experience difficulty making links between the speaker's representation of the message and their own knowledge and experience. According to the construction metaphor, the inaccuracy may be the result of not knowing where or when to build upon the structures of one's mental model to make it look like the speaker's representation. According to the script metaphor, the inaccuracy in intercultural listening is most likely the result of categorizing information and experiences in different ways; because the listener does not pick up all the cues that the speaker makes available, his representation of the host's message is somewhat distorted.

All four metaphors have merit. All four focus on *exactly what* the listener has understood. All four generate explanations concerning adequate and inadequate comprehension. All four suggest something about the processes of listening and cultural adaptation, some to a lesser degree than others. These four metaphors have been chosen because together they elucidate the components of listening comprehension and provide a definition of listening comprehension that none could do on its own.

For describing listening comprehension, however, the script metaphor, because of the way that it bonds listening comprehension and culture and elucidates the type of schema intercultural listeners need to link information and build mental models, is the most useful. It is also useful because it naturally evokes the use of terms like roles, setting and goals, and challenges—words that are important in describing and narrating adventures in intercultural listening.

The script metaphor cannot stand alone as a comprehensive model of intercultural listening. Although it describes the content of comprehension, highlighting exactly what it is that intercultural listeners can or cannot understand, it is weak in discussing the process of activating those scripts. Because it does not adequately address the process of listening comprehension, when compared to the metaphors of a guessing game, a network, and construction, it does not have as much power to describe strategies for meeting the challenges encountered by intercultural listeners. The script metaphor does not deny that challenges and strategies exist; it just needs to be augmented on occasion by principles from the other metaphors. Thus, although the next section is very much organized around the elements of a script—roles, purpose, challenge—the principles from the other metaphors, like a rudder steering a ship through uncharted waters, are needed in order to guide researchers and language teachers in their exploration of the roles, purposes, challenges and strategies of listening comprehension.

A Description of Intercultural Listening

On a beautiful spring evening, seven monolingual American girls played on the church lawn. The game, “Ships and Sailors,” was one they often played, but on this particular evening, the commands were not in English, but in Indonesian. The words, though presented in a different context the week before, were, to them, still unfamiliar: *depan* (in front), *belakang* (behind), *kiri* (left), *kanan* (right), *makan* (eat), *mandi laut* (bathe in the ocean, adapted as “man overboard”), *tidur* (sleep), *satu* (one), *dua* (two), *tiga* (three), *empat* (four), and *apel* (inspection). For a while, the teacher controlled the game, introducing the words four at a time. Once the girls seemed to have a pretty good grasp of the main words, she chose one of them to be the captain. Had an Indonesian

overheard their game, she would have been either confused or doubled over with laughter. *Kanan* was reduced to /k'nan/, *belakang*, /blekan/, and *depan*, “that ‘d’ word.” Phrases like “three men eating,” which should have been *makan bertiga*, became “*tiga* eating” or, occasionally, “*tiga makan*,” but never with *tiga* at the end of the phrase and never with the grammatical particle, *ber*. In their first encounter with another language, it seems that the nine and ten-year-old girls had interpreted sounds and grammar within the framework of their own language.

Interpreted in light of the metaphors, the girls in this anecdote have learned to crack the code and have integrated the linguistic aspects of Indonesian with their knowledge of the English linguistic system. The girls have used the context of the game to link their understanding of the rules and routines of “Ships and Sailors” to activate knowledge regarding the types of behavior that will be expected of them. They have accessed their scripts about ships and sailors, playing games, and using Indonesian.

In many ways, both the listening process and the comprehension process play out in much the same way they do when listening to the language we learned from our parents and caregivers. As demonstrated by the distortions of the language played on the church lawn, listening to another language, particularly if it is one we haven't quite mastered, adds another dimension. Naturally, listeners interpret sounds, words, and ideas through the scripts they have constructed of their world. Learning to listen to another language frequently challenges and enriches these scripts, almost always influences them in some way, and occasionally interrupts and interferes with the listener's preconceived ideas. Four themes provide a framework for organizing and categorizing elements of the script of intercultural listening:

1. Who are intercultural listeners? What are their roles?
2. Where and why do intercultural listeners listen? What are the settings and purposes for intercultural listening?
3. What challenges do intercultural listeners encounter?
4. How do intercultural listeners meet those challenges?

Roles of the Intercultural Listener

Unlike the roles of drama which are fairly static, listeners' roles often shift during the conversation. They alternate between speaking and listening roles. They might also shift to different types of listening roles. Brown (1995 a) identifies four types of listening roles: over-hearer, addressee, critical listener, and observer.

Over-hearers are those who have no opportunity to shape the discourse. They simply listen to the conversation and try to understand. Their presence or absence has no influence on the direction of the interaction. According to Schober and Clark (1989), the accuracy of the over-hearers' comprehension is significantly lower than that of other listeners. Those who merely overheard the instructions were not as accurate in their interpretations as those who were allowed the opportunity to interact with their interlocutor.

Addressees have the right to signify when they have understood; when listeners don't understand, competent speakers will often reshape the interaction until it is understood. Schober and Clark (1989) found that as speakers and addressees established areas of mutual understanding, the accuracy of the addressee's listening comprehension increased. Although it was true that the accuracy of the over-hearer's comprehension also increased over time, it was very unlikely that it would reach the level at which the

addressee began.

Brown's (1995a) study illustrates the role of critical listener. In the experiment, a pair of listeners was instructed to narrate a film they had seen for a second pair of listeners. In the first pair, one was speaker, the other was listener. Because the speaker's partner was familiar with the film, while listening, she monitored the message of her partner, adding crucial details that the speaker might have forgotten. This was a critical listener.

Observers may not have enough information to listen critically even though they are physically present and recognized by other participants in the interaction. Because they are present, the speaker monitors their reaction to the discourse to assess whether they have understood. Unlike the addressee, who is expected to respond, the observer's sole responsibility in the discourse is to listen.

Schober and Clark's (1989) research, as well as Brown's, demonstrates the influence that listening roles play in listening comprehension. In Schober and Clark's experiment, addressees and over-hearers had exactly the same information available to them. The addressees' comprehension was much more fluent than that of the over-hearers'. The over-hearers complained that the information that the speaker gave was not very clear and was given too quickly for them to complete the task. The listeners in the experiment were all native-speakers, so it was not any complication of second language decoding and interpretation that caused deficiency in comprehension. Brown (1995a), in referring both to her study and that of Schober and Clark, suggests that a difference in the accuracy of comprehension was due to the listener's ability to confirm what was understood and monitor the rate and content of the information the speaker gave.

The influence of the intercultural listener's role on the accuracy of her comprehension has also been demonstrated in the field of applied linguistics. Schumann and Schumann (1977) theorize that in speaking, when the listener has some control of the topic and when the conversational partner is making an effort to be understood, the language learner has a greater opportunity for intake than the foreign language listener who is merely eavesdropping. In two separate, unrelated introspective studies about learning Spanish, Carson (in Carson & Longhini, 2002) and Schultz (in Schultz & Elliot, 2000) both note that they seemed to understand more when the language was directed toward them than when it was not. Rost (1990) and Brown (1995a) suggest that interactive listeners who are sensitive to the speaker's role, and who have perhaps experienced that role, seem to be more effective in comprehending the concepts of the interaction.

Settings and Purpose

The roles involved in intercultural listening are grounded in the setting and purpose of the listeners and those with whom they interact. Indeed, the setting and goals are an integral part of any script. It is these elements that set the stage for the storms that are bound to come.

Where?

The setting of intercultural listening can be represented both concretely and abstractly. Concretely, the setting of intercultural listening is the geographic or physical location. It is the country, city, street, park bench, building—any physical space in which the act of intercultural listening occurs. This physical space contains the props and most

salient reminders that the listening episode is one of intercultural listening: a host and a guest from two different cultures, two different language groups, and, in some cases, two different ethnicities. The geography, architecture, and objects in the physical environment not only provide a topic for conversation and visual support (Mendelsohn, 1994), but also influence the potential for interaction (Gudykunst & Kim, 2003). Nevertheless, geographic locales are too specific and too external to encompass the experiences of the diverse group of intercultural listeners that make up second language classrooms.

The psychological terrain and socio-cultural arena are less tangible. The psychological terrain is composed of both the listener's ability to cognitively process and assess the interaction and his or her affective state. It is influenced by the socio-cultural arena, which, although slightly more tangible, contains subtleties of social organization: the sometimes articulated rules for interpretation that lie just below the surface. Abstractly, then, the setting for intercultural listening—or any listening for that matter—falls within the cognitive domain, the affective domain, and the socio-cultural domain.

The cognitive domain is the setting for the logical thought processes of listeners. It is within this domain that intercultural listeners decode and interpret the discourse of the host language. The listener's ability to manipulate the linguistic code in order to comprehend discourse involves identifying referents (Brown, 1995b), activating prior knowledge of the topic (Mendelsohn, 1995; Buck, 1995, 2001; Anderson & Lynch, 1988; Carrell, 1987), identifying the rhetorical organization (Carrell, 1988; Jung, 2003), and creating mental models of the text (Anderson & Lynch, 1988; Buck, 2001; Uttal, Fisher, & Taylor, 2006).

The affective domain is the setting for feelings, emotion, and motivation of the

intercultural listener concerning the host culture. It is related to the cognitive domain in that memory attaches to each bit of cognitive information emotional, intuitive, or sensory data that is related to it (Stevick, 1999). Thus, in our memory of dogs, it is not just a mental description or visualization of a dog that comes to mind, but also experiences that we have had with dogs. Someone who was attacked by a dog as a child may well have *fear* encoded in his or her memory file of dogs. If the intercultural listener's affective response is negative—*anxiety, negative attitudes, lack of motivation*—it distorts the message, paralyzing cognition (Krashen, 1981), and debilitates cultural adaptation (Kim, 2001), thus crossing over into the socio-cultural domain.

The socio-cultural domain is the setting for interaction between intercultural listeners and their hosts. Here, the listener must be familiar with subtle, often unarticulated rules regarding the organization and behavior of the community. Gudykunst and Kim (2003) call these socio-cultural norms. Such norms are concerned with the role of the speaker and listener in the community and the vital service that they perform. As such, they dominate the social domain. Socio-cultural norms also encompass the notion of the speaker's perspective regarding the intercultural listener's level of belonging in the community: is the listener an insider or outsider, guest or member? Listeners' role in the society and their identity as insider or outsider directly affects the way that people react to them, talk to them, and shape the discourse when communicating with them.

Thus, listening is a cognitive activity in which one deals with the intellectual propositions of discourse. It is an affective activity, shaped by the listener's attitude, beliefs and emotion (Stevick, 1989; Arnold & Brown, 1989). One cannot divorce what

the listener experiences from the way the listener categorizes and processes the experience (Atkinson, 2002; Watson-Gegeo, 2004). Neither can one divorce the listener's processing of facts and ideas from the way the listener affectively internalizes the experience (Stevick, 1989). Intercultural listening is a socio-cultural activity, intricately tied to the discourse of the cognitive process and the reaction and emotion of the affective process. These three—the cognitive, socio-cultural, and affective domains simultaneously and interdependently affect the intercultural listener.

Why?

When intercultural listeners interact within the cognitive, affective, and socio-cultural domains, they generally have a purpose for listening. Perhaps they want to get to know those in their community. Maybe they need to perform a service or obtain a service from the one with whom they interact. They might need to learn something, or they may simply want to be entertained. Generally, people listen in four situations: interaction, transaction, instruction, and entertainment.

Social interaction takes place just about anywhere: in the home, on the street with neighbors and friends, at the park, at parties, and in other types of social gatherings. Brown and Yule (1983) suggest that conversations are most frequently conducted for the purpose of socialization, maintaining relationships, or making small talk. In such talk, the listener should learn to attend well, keep the channel of communication open, and ensure a good feeling between himself and the speaker (Mendelsohn, 1994).

Transaction is the interaction in which we engage to conduct the business of life: shopping, asking for and giving assistance, providing and receiving from the community. This is the predominant type of conversation in foreign language textbooks (Brown &

Yule, 1983). The goal of this type of conversation is to exchange information.

A third type of listening is for the purpose of instruction. This learning may be in the classroom (Holden, 2000; Lin, 2000; Tse, 2000) or in homes (Bongartz & Schneider, 2003; Broner & Tarone, 2001; Thompson, 2002). Through listening, one learns socialization skills (Bongartz & Schneider, 2003; Broner & Tarone, 2001) and the rules of the language (Broner & Tarone, 2001).

A fourth type of listening is for entertainment. In the intercultural listening classroom, some teachers have advocated curricula that bring education and entertainment together (Tse, 2000; Lin, 2002; Holden, 2000). In their listening classrooms, students are directed in their listening to and viewing of movies. Mendelsohn (1994) points out that when one listens for pleasure, he is motivated to listen more; the more one listens, the more his fluency in the language grows.

Whether listening for the sake of maintaining relationships, making transactions, learning, or for entertainment, the intercultural listener may encounter incidents of miscommunication, poor communication, miscomprehension, no comprehension, and apprehension. Soon, the intercultural listener discovers that poor code-cracking skills or an inability to make the appropriate links between prior experience and the current situation has created challenges in the cognitive domain. Anxiety and apprehension bring about challenges in the affective domain. Unfamiliar social routines for conducting transactions, social interaction, instruction, and even entertainment has thrown the listener off balance and initiated a series of challenges in the social domain. How can the intercultural listener address them before they destroy his psychological terrain or get him expelled from the socio-cultural arena?

Challenges and Strategies in Intercultural Listening

Intercultural listeners must learn to deal with the complexities of another linguistic code (Mendelsohn, 1994; Rost, 1990, Tsui & Fullilove, 1998), the frustration of an unfamiliar and sometimes uncomfortable situation (Ehrmann, 1999; Stevick, 1999), and the challenge of adapting to another society (Gudykunst & Kim, 2003; Kim, 2001). In a typical listening episode, intercultural listeners may encounter difficulty in processing the message, dysphoria in responding to the situation, dissonance in finding their place in the interaction, or all three. How can they address these problems?

Difficulties and Cognitive Strategies

Challenges in the cognitive domain are characterized by a difficulty in or inability to process the discourse. This difficulty may arise in word recognition (Aitchison, 1994; Eskey, 1988; Tsui & Fullilove, 1998; Vandergrift, 2006) or in grasping meaning (Aitchinson, 1994; Anderson & Lynch, 1988; Mendelsohn, 1994; Nunan, 1999; Rost, 1990, 2002). Barriers to grasping the meaning include a lack of experience (Slackman & Hudson, 1984; Reynolds et al., 1982; Carrell, 1987; Headlam, 1990; Buck, 2001), an inappropriate activation or lack of knowledge (Anderson & Lynch, 1988; Brown, 1995b; Carrell, 1987; Carrell & Eisterhold, 1988; Tsui & Fullilove, 1998; Vogely, 1995), and text boundedness (Carrell, 1987; Schnell, 1992; Tsui & Fullilove, 1998). All these difficulties may be grouped as arising from one of two sources: poor word recognition and an inability to grasp meaning.

Table 2.1 summarizes cognitive challenges, the strategies that intercultural listeners have used in meeting them, and the experimental and introspective studies in

which listeners have cited using such strategies. To meet the challenges caused by poor recognition, listeners have engaged in building their vocabulary, asking for a translation, or guessing the word's meaning from context. To facilitate grasping the meaning of an utterance, intercultural listeners have identified the topic, listened for the gist, and tried to predict outcomes based on their previous experience and prior knowledge. Mendelsohn (1994) also suggests that listeners determine the meaning of an utterance by listening for the mood or for one crucial detail, but these have not been identified in any qualitative or quantitative research. Buck (2001) implies that listeners might use mental scripts to grasp the meaning of discourse.

Table 2.1 Difficulties and Cognitive Strategies

Sources	Strategies	Studies
Poor word recognition	Build vocabulary	Leung (2002), Gan et al. (2004)
	Guess from context	Bacon (1992); Vogely (1995)
	Translation	Hsiao & Oxford (2002)
Inability to grasp meaning	Keywords	Hsiao & Oxford (2002)
	Identify topic	Bacon (1992); Vogely (1995); Schober & Clark (1989)
	Listen for gist	Bacon (1992); Vogely (1995)
	Predict	Bacon (1992); Vogely (1995)
	Use scripts	Slackman & Hudson (1984)

Poor word recognition. Comprehension requires a recognition of words (Aitchison, 1994, Carson & Longhini, 2002); good comprehension requires such recognition to be automatic (Eskey, 1988; Tsui & Fullilove, 1998; Vandergrift, 2006). In Vogely's (1995) study, the listeners indicated that the second most critical skill in listening comprehension was that of word recognition. As far as actually noting that they used the skill, though, none of the confident listeners thought of it; only half mentioned it when they encountered difficulties. Thus, it would seem that fluency in word recognition is most noted by its absence and taken for granted when present. To facilitate word

recognition, intercultural listeners need to differentiate one word from other words in a stream of speech and assign an appropriate meaning to it.

Differentiating a word from other words in a stream of speech is a complex task. Mendelsohn (1994) points out that while readers have spaces, punctuation, and paragraph markings to help them know the boundaries of words and thoughts, listeners do not have this luxury. Speech does have its signals for word and thought boundaries: pitch (Chafe, 1989), intonation (Brazil, 1997), stress (Chafe, 1989; Celce-Murcia, et al., 1996; Morley, 1991). The complication is that languages use these signals differently and some languages, especially English, have a tendency to blur the boundaries (Flowerdew & Miller, 2005; Carrier, 1999; Celce-Murcia et al., 1996; Gilbert, 1994; Rost, 1990). Thus, although the intercultural listeners may recognize an isolated word by pronunciation, when put with other words, they may not recognize it (Carrier, 1999; Carson & Longhini, 2002; Goh, 2000; Huang, 2005; Morley, 1992).

Another problem that intercultural listeners have is that even though they might recognize a word within a stream of speech, they cannot assign a meaning to it. This may stem from an inability to process the word quickly (Carrier, 1999; Goh, 2000); by the time listeners have assigned meaning to a word, they have lost other parts of the discourse. The problem of assigning meaning to the word may also result from forgetfulness and distraction (Goh, 2000; Schnell, 1992). Sometimes, listeners have either forgotten what the word means (Goh, 2000) or, in the distraction of other words in the discourse, forgotten what the word was that they were in the process of decoding (Goh, 2000, Schnell, 1992).

To deal with the deficiencies in recognizing words and remembering their

meanings, intercultural listeners have engaged three distinct strategies: building vocabulary (Leung, 2002; Gan, 2004), asking for a translation (Hsiao & Oxford, 2003), and guessing from context (Anderson & Lynch, 1988; Bacon, 1992; Brown, 1984; Nation, 2000; Vogely, 1995). Building vocabulary may be accomplished through extensive exposure to the host language (Leung, 2002) or a simple practice of setting goals for learning a certain number of words each day and sticking to those goals (Gan, Humphreys, & Hamp-Lyons, 2004). The research concerning translation and guessing from context is not as specific about how listeners use these two strategies, but does provide evidence that such strategies have been employed. Participants in a survey of learning strategies indicated that they asked for a translation in order to know the meaning of a word (Hsiao & Oxford, 2002). Participants in Vogely's (1995) study seemed to be divided in their perception concerning the importance of guessing from context; only half perceived that it was a useful skill. However, in practice, particularly in trying to recover comprehension, 77% resorted to guessing from context.

Inability to Grasp Meaning. To understand exactly what a speaker means requires that the listeners do more than recognize words; they must also recognize meaning. To arrive at a meaning, the intercultural listener interprets the text against the background of prior knowledge and previous experiences (Anderson & Lynch, 1988; Rost, 1990). There are two challenges to the grasping of meaning: lack of knowledge (Anderson & Lynch, 1988; Headlam, 1990; Mendelsohn, 1994) and lack of experience (Bacon, 1992; Carrell, 1987; Reynolds et al., 1982; Schultz & Elliot, 2000). Grasping meaning is a necessary part of comprehension, whether in reading or listening. Since there is a greater number of

reading studies and they seem to illustrate the need for experience and knowledge quite effectively, a few have been cited in this section along with relevant studies of listening.

In some situations, the intercultural listener lacks the knowledge needed to interpret an utterance. Anderson and Lynch (1988) propose that when knowledge is absent or incomplete, the listener ceases to understand. A study of reading comprehension illustrates the importance of knowledge for comprehension. While in Jamaica, Headlam (1990) was listening to a little boy read from an American primer. The boy came across a word he could not decode, *carpet*. Headlam, in trying to explain the concept, realized the child had never seen a carpet. For him to comprehend, she had to provide a concept which the boy was familiar with: mat. Once he had a working knowledge of the word *carpet*, he could understand the story. When a word or concept does not exist in the intercultural listener's knowledge base, he or she, like the child in Headlam's study, will not be able to comprehend.

Another challenge to grasping meaning is a lack of experience. Experience is an integral part of the listening process (Schober & Clark, 1989). Listeners use their experience and former exposure to the topic of conversation in order to anticipate and predict the direction of the utterance (Anderson & Lynch, 1988; Bacon, 1992), which, in turn, helps them understand what they have heard (Bacon, 1992). Schultz (in Schultz & Elliot, 2000) noted that a lack of experience with unfamiliar television genres hindered her understanding of the program: "I still have problems with TV news, soap operas, and other programs except travelogues and health programs where I am already familiar with the content of the broadcast (Schultz, 111).

A study by Reynolds et al. (1982) illustrates how experience with a particular

script facilitates comprehension. The researchers gave Anglo-American and African American students a letter written by an African American student about a *sounding*. In the letter, a boy tells about a situation that occurred in the school cafeteria. After describing the exchange of insults he had with his friend, he wrote, “We really got into it then. After a while, many people got involved--4, 5, then 6. It was a riot.” After the gym teacher “settled things down,” the boys were sent to the principal, who expelled them for a week and called their parents. While the Anglo-Americans had no script for *sounding*, African Americans knew it as a form of insult. African American students interpreted the event as a playful exchange of insults. Anglo-Americans assumed the letter was about a fight. Phrases like “it was a riot” and “really got into it” and the consequences of the event were consistent with “sounding,” and a physical fight. Because they lacked experience with soundings, the Anglo-Americans did not properly interpret the letter.

How do listeners cope with an inability to grasp meaning? The literature suggests several ways: identify the topic (Anderson & Lynch, 1988; Bacon, 1992; Brown, 1995a; Mendelsohn, 1994; Schober & Clark, 1989), listen for the gist (Bacon, 1992; Mendelsohn, 1994; Vogely, 1995), predict and anticipate (Mendelsohn, 1994), and listen for the mood (Mendelsohn, 1994). Some strategies are more accessible and more useful for intercultural listeners than others. In examining these strategies more closely, I will draw support from two studies, one by Bacon (1992) and one by Vogely (1995) to demonstrate the use and usefulness of four strategies for grasping meaning: identifying the topic, listening for the gist, predicting, and using scripts.

One strategy for grasping the meaning of an utterance is to identify the topic (Anderson & Lynch, 1988; Brown, 1995a; Mendelsohn, 1994; Bacon, 1992; Schober &

Clark, 1989). Identifying the topic helps activate the appropriate script, thus enabling further comprehension of the discourse. By identifying the topic, listeners in Bacon's (1992) study were able to understand a difficult text in Spanish.

Another strategy that facilitates the intercultural listener's ability to grasp the meaning of the discourse is listening for the gist (Bacon, 1992; Mendelsohn, 1994; Vogely, 1995). Vogely (1995) found that 79% of the listeners in her study were able to derive some meaning from a difficult text by listening for the gist.

A third and fourth strategy for grasping meaning are related: prediction (Anderson & Lynch, 1988; Bacon, 1992; Brown, 1995a; Buck, 1995; Mendelsohn, 1994; Rost, 1990; Vogely, 1995) and using scripts (Buck, 2001). Prediction involves relating what is heard to one's personal experience in order to anticipate what will happen next (Bacon, 1992). A fourth strategy for grasping meaning that was implied by Buck (2001) is that of using scripts. In using the strategy, the intercultural listener would access the routines learned in a similar discourse and use them to predict the sequence of utterances in a new situation. Slackman and Hudson (1984) discuss how scripts influence the comprehension of preschoolers, but little experimental research has investigated it either within the context of second or foreign language learning in general or within the context of intercultural listening in particular.

Dysphoria and Affective Strategies

Both the process of learning another language (Ehrmann, 1999; Horwitz, 2000; Stevick, 1999) and the process of cultural adaptation (Agar, 1994; Kim, 2001) can be deeply unsettling. Horwitz (2000) compares foreign language learning to bad hair days, asserting that "the disparity between how we see ourselves and how we think others see

us has been my consistent explanation for foreign language learners' anxieties" (p. 258). Spielmann and Radnovsky (2001) use the word 'dysphoria,' an antonym of 'euphoria,' to describe the lack of elation and prolonged sense of distress that one faces when one's perspective of the world is compromised. For intercultural listeners, this dysphoria undermines their confidence (de Andres, 1999, Krashen, 1981), their sense of self (Lindquist, 2001), and their drive to follow through on goals and ambitions (Dornyei, 2003). Anxiety occurs at all stages of language learning (Onwuegbuzie, Bailey, & Daley, 2000) and possibly, with any language (Rodriguez and Abreu, 2003). Major sources for this anxiety include perceived incompetence (Brown, 1995a, b; Egbert, 2003; Kitano, 2001; Mendelsohn, 1995; Nunan, 1999; Schober & Clark, 1989; Skehan, 1998; Vogely, 1999; Williams & Burden, 1999), challenged identity and self-worth (de Andres, 1999; Linquist, 2001), and a lack of motivation (Arnold & Brown, 1999; Egbert, 2003; Gardner, Masgoret, Tennant, & Mihic, 2004).

Table 2.2 shows the challenges of the affective domain, namely, the causes of dysphoria, strategies for diffusing dysphoria, and experimental or introspective studies regarding how intercultural listeners use the strategies. Affective strategies are not as prolific as those of the cognitive domain. In fact, there are almost as many strategies as there are sources, and the links between strategies and sources are mostly inferred.

Table 2.2 Dysphoria and Affective Strategies

Sources	Strategies	Studies
Perceived incompetence	encourage oneself	Hsiao & Oxford (2003), Rossiter (2003)
Challenged identity		
Lack of motivation	take control	Noels et al. (1999), Williams & Burden (1999)

To combat perceived incompetence and challenged self-worth, intercultural

listeners may find ways to encourage themselves. Flow theory (Egbert, 2003) suggests that listeners are more motivated when they control what they learn and participate in evaluating how well they have learned.

Perceived Incompetence. One type of affective challenge to the intercultural listener is perceived incompetence. Some listeners become anxious because they do not know how to accomplish the task (Egbert, 2003); others, because they use the wrong strategies and tactics to accomplish the task (Vogely, 1999). Elkhafafi (2005) proposes that anxiety causes poor performance, not the other way around. This assertion is affirmed in a number of studies of intercultural listening (Brown, 1995a; Schober & Clark, 1989; Carrier, 1999; Kitano, 2001; Vogely, 1999), of intercultural communication (Stevick, 1989; Brown, 1985b; Felix-Brasdefer, 2004; Flowerdew & Miller, 2005), and of language learning (Krashen, 1981; Oxford, 1999; Spielmann & Radnofsky, 2001; Thomson, 2001; Oxford, 1999). Perceived incompetence heightens anxiety (Kitano, 2001) and works against language learning (Gregersen & Horowitz, 2002; MacIntyre et al., 1997; Vogely, 1999).

Confidence seems to bolster good performance; listeners with high self-esteem are more likely to be successful (Krashen, 1981; Carrier, 1999; de Andres, 1999; Oxford, 1999), even though they tend to overestimate their ability (McIntyre et al., 1997). For children and adolescents adapting to a new culture and language, self confidence is especially important. In a survey of pre-adolescent and adolescent foreign language learners, Williams and Burden (1999) found that the younger students perceived confidence as being necessary for successful learning.

A case study by De Andres (1999) illustrates the importance of confidence. A

little boy in her EFL class had very low self-esteem. In class, he could often be found daydreaming, avoiding work, remaining on the fringe of the group, hesitating in new situations, and being reluctant to express opinions. He seemed to be afraid of making mistakes and disliked discussing his feelings. During the course of the semester, one in which the teacher deliberately designed projects that required students to express their feelings and to encourage each other, the student changed. An encouraging word spoken by one of his classmates during group time changed the way the student saw himself. Though he still had difficulty expressing his feelings, he gained the confidence he needed to ask questions, join in the rest of the group, and complete his work. The boosted confidence changed his behavior not only in the language classroom, but also at home.

How can intercultural listeners boost their self-confidence? The self-confidence of De Andres' student was boosted through encouragement. Confidence may be gained by encouraging oneself or positive self-talk, a strategy that many language learners have used (Hsiao & Oxford, 2002) and some language teachers have promoted (Rossiter, 2003).

Challenged identity and self-worth. A second type of affective challenge is the loss of identity and self-worth. The intercultural listener's transition from one culture to another may be accompanied by a loss of status, which challenges her sense of self-worth (Lindquist, 1995). This, in turn, may cause the intercultural listener to question who she is in the host culture, challenging her sense of identity (Ehrman, 1999).

Because they have already established themselves and have a firm grasp of who they are in their home cultures, adult intercultural listeners face special challenges in transition from one culture to another. Their transition may be accompanied by a

dramatic loss of status as the one who was a competent advisor in his or her home community becomes a bumbling idiot in the host culture. Lindquist (1995) calls this role deprivation and points out that it is not an uncommon phenomenon among sojourners. In moving to a new culture, they must redefine their roles in society. Lindquist proposes that if the sojourners soon discover roles in which they feel comfortable, they can usually adapt easily to the culture. However, if the time of role deprivation is prolonged, the sojourner will be caught in a cycle of long-term stress. After all, it is one thing to redefine one's role in a new community; it is quite another to have no role, no comfortable place to belong, and no certainty concerning one's identity.

Living and listening in another culture and language challenges one's sense of self (Agar, 1994; Ehrman, 1999; Kim, 2001; Linquist, 1995). Kim (2001) proposes that in some cases, a sojourner's identity is not only challenged, but is quite often changed. As Agar (1994) put it, "Once you struggle against [language and culture] in the company of its other participants, you've made it your own. It changes you. It's personal. It's not just something you use to communicate; it's a part of what you are" (p. 206).

How can the intercultural listener respond to these challenges to self-worth and identity, challenges that hit the core of human existence? A study by Ehrman (1999) suggests that flexibility and tolerance of ambiguity might be the key. Drawing from psychology, Ehrman uses the concept of ego-boundaries to describe what happens to the identity of those who are learning another language. Two terms, thin and thick, describe the permeability of one's identity. Those with thick ego boundaries have a strong, unchangeable sense of who they are. Those with thin ego boundaries are willing to change who they are. This willingness to change is also seen in how language learners

absorb new information. According to Ehrman, learners with thin ego boundaries were able to take in a wealth of information without questioning its structure; any ambiguity was tolerated. Those who tolerated ambiguity tended to acquire the language more easily than their ambiguity-intolerant peers.

Flexibility and tolerance is good, but there is a danger in being overly flexible and too tolerant. Ehrman points out that one of the dangers that those with thin ego-boundaries face is that their tolerance of everything leads to an inability to define who they are. Typically, well-adjusted intercultural listeners maintain an inner core of values (Ehrmann, 1999; Elmer, 1993) that allow them to live with the ambiguity of simultaneously stepping into another worldview while viewing it from the outside (Elmer, 1993; Kim, 2003). They are able to step beyond tolerance and maintain an orientation toward others that is characterized by compassion for those who are different (Kim, 2003). Thus, an important affective strategy for the intercultural listener is to adopt an identity characterized by tolerance and compassion, and embrace that identity.

Lack of Motivation. A third source of affective challenge concerns the intercultural listener's motivation. In a nutshell, motivation consists of a desire to achieve a goal, effort put forth to achieve it, and pleasure in the achievement (Gardner, cited in Baker and MacIntyre, 2000). Intercultural listeners have a variety of goals for studying another language and culture. These may include, but are not limited to these six affective elements: a desire to communicate with the people in the host culture (Jones, 1994, Yashima, 2002), an affinity for the culture (Csizer & Dornyei, 2005), a longing to establish peace and promote understanding in dealing with one's enemies (Donitsa-Schmidt, Inbar, & Shohamy, 2004), an effort to pass a test (Gan et al., 2004), a goal of

collecting data for research on a dissertation (Jones, 1994), and the desire to attend a class taught by a native speaker (Kim & Margolis, 2000).

Demotivating experiences, whether in learning the language or adapting to the culture (Gardner et al., 2004), as well as negative attitudes about that culture (Arnold & Brown, 1999; Csizer & Dornyei, 2005; Donitsa-Schmidt et al., 2004; Dornyei, 2003) discourage the intercultural listener from attempting to acquire the host language and culture. Natural curiosity motivates. A motivating task is one in which the intercultural listener is so intensely focused, so deeply and effortlessly involved, and so engaged that he loses his sense of self-consciousness (Egbert, 2003, Arnold & Brown, 1999). Arnold and Brown (1999) contend, and Egbert (2003) affirms, that in this type of intrinsically motivating experience, the learner becomes so involved that mind and emotion flow together as one. This flow is characterized by intense focus, enjoyment, engagement in the task, and a lack of self-consciousness. According to Egbert, to achieve flow in the listening environment, the task must be within the control of the listener as well as challenging, interesting, and engaging.

How can intercultural listeners deal with their own lack of motivation? Research suggests that teachers are the key (Donitsa-Schmidt et al., 2004; Wilkinson, 2002; Williams & Burden, 1999). First, they should allow intercultural listeners a measure of control over their learning experience (Arnold and Brown, 1999; Egbert, 2003). Students are more motivated to learn when their teachers support learner autonomy (Noels, Pelletier, & Clement, 1999). One might argue that learner autonomy is a Western value that Eastern students may not respond to in the same way. Studies by Tse (2000) and Lin (2002) do not support such assumptions. Though these two researchers did find that

some of their Taiwanese students found it difficult to adapt to a learner-centered classroom, by and large, most of the students adjusted quite quickly, and their motivation increased.

Second, teachers should provide appropriately challenging listening tasks. The tasks should not be overly challenging (Baker and MacIntyre, 2000; Egbert, 2003; Maracle & Richards, 2000; Spielmann & Radnovsky, 2001). Neither should they be too easy (Spielmann & Radnovsky, 2001). Intercultural listeners should have a reasonable chance of completing the task (Arnold & Brown, 1999). Thompson's (2002) empirical study of teachers in a study abroad program emphasizes the importance of providing the right amount of challenge. The foreign language teachers were challenged to do ethnographic interviews in the host culture. Those who put any effort at all into the program made gains in listening, speaking, grammar, and cultural knowledge.

What strategies does this suggest for intercultural listeners who lack motivation? First, they should find something about the host culture and language that arouses their curiosity. Second, they should seek out learning environments that allow them to be autonomous, somewhere that they can exercise a comfortable amount of control.

Dissonance and Socio-Cultural Strategies

The challenges that arise in the socio-cultural domain are closely related to some of those in the cognitive and affective domains. The socio-cultural and cognitive domains interact as the intercultural listener interprets meaning from social contexts (Kramsch, 1992). Seedhouse (2004) theorizes that all things are shaped by context, not only through discourse, but through norms of behavior, cultural rituals, and the values and beliefs of the host culture. No detail can be dismissed as disorderly or irrelevant. What may seem

to be irrelevant may be an equally valid means of shaping the context. The successful intercultural listener is familiar with the significance of the symbols of discourse and the beliefs and values they represent (Tang, 2006) and recognizes that cultural rules and values generate meaning behind the meaning of those symbols (Atkinson, 2002; Elmer, 1997; Gudykunst & Kim, 2003; Kim, 2001; Savignon & Sysoyev, 2002; Tang, 2006; Watson-Gegeo, 2004). Intercultural listeners come to know that there are multiple representations of the world, not just the one that they call their own (Watson-Gegeo, 2004) and that they must learn to negotiate meaning (Carrier, 1999) within and according to the boundaries of the new socio-cultural context. Intercultural listeners must be cognizant of their role in shaping the context of communication within the host culture (Atkinson, 2002; Carrier, 1999; Gudykunst & Kim, 2003; Kramsch, 1992; Markee, 2004; Seedhouse, 2004; Watson-Gegeo, 2004).

Affectively and socio-culturally, listening is influenced by the listener's perception of and responses to the social environment. Many language pedagogues shy away from the word *anxiety* when describing the language learners' affective state (Young, 1992), referring to the tension with less affectively-charged words. In anthropology, researchers have begun to shy away from the common term, *culture shock* to describe the affective state of the sojourner (Gudykunst & Kim, 2003; Kim, 2001; Ward, Bochner, & Furnham, 2001), opting for the word *stress* (Kim, 2001; Ward, Bochner, Furnham, 2001). Indeed, the process of intercultural adaptation is stressful (Gudykunst & Kim, 2003; Kim, 2001; Thompson, 2002, Rising, 2001; Lindquist, 1995).

Finding one's way in through a maze of different priorities, values, and roles may cause the intercultural listener to feel a sense of dissonance, but it is a process that can be

“simultaneously troublesome and enriching”(Kim, 2001, p. 21). This process of acculturation, of adapting to the rules and structure of the host culture is the chief aim and sole challenge of the socio-cultural domain. Reconciling the dissonance consists of two tasks: valuing the host’s perspective (Olson, 1977) and increasing social contact with the host culture (Bacon, 2004)

A major challenge of the socio-cultural domain involves adapting oneself to new rules. Cultural rules, often subtle and unconscious, lie at the heart of a community’s identity (Watson-Gegeo, 2004). Such rules are often not taught in the classroom and are difficult to absorb without conscious effort (Broersma, 2001). They form the very stereotypes that guide listeners in understanding and misunderstanding the acts and context of interaction, as well as being understood and misunderstood within it (Gudykunst & Kim, 2001). Intercultural listeners’ success or failure, to a large degree, depends upon their ability to act and interact in a way that is acceptable according to the host culture (Atkinson, 2001; Carrier, 1999; Gudykunst & Kim, 2003). Intercultural listeners may feel dissonance while trying to balance the habits of their home culture with the rules of the host culture.

In the early stages, intercultural listeners who apply the rules of their home culture may find that their communication is less than adequate: they may not be as polite in giving advice as they had hoped (Matsumura, 2001), too brash in making their refusals (Felix-Brasdefer, 2004), or incompetent in conveying their intent (Markee, 2004). Intercultural listeners must learn to interpret the words and actions of those in the host culture according to a new set of rules. Dissonance occurs as the intercultural listener’s home culture clashes with the host culture on issues of status, priorities, and cultural

values.

Status. Cultural rules regarding status govern what people do in interaction and define the rights and responsibilities they have within that interaction (Carrier, 1999). Intercultural listening becomes increasingly complex in the light of the disparity in how cultures value status (Gudykunst & Kim, 2003; Hofstede & Pederson, 1999; Oliver, 2000). Low power cultures such as the United States value equality and downplay hierarchal relationships. High power cultures venerate their elders and emphasize one's status. This is a difficult rule to break. Students from high power cultures who had the permission and the linguistic skills to negotiate equality were reluctant to do so in their interaction with the teacher (Markee, 2004; He, 2004; Leibscher & Dailey-O'Cain, 2003).

Priorities. Cultural rules regarding priorities are another source of socio-cultural challenge for the intercultural listener. Humans have a natural tendency to organize themselves according to various principles and values. Some cultures would risk losing a friendship in order for truth to be revealed; others might condone hiding the hurtful truth in order to maintain harmony in the relationship (Elmer, 1993; Tang, 2006). Some cultures place a priority on the rights of the individual; others, the harmony of the community (Gudykunst & Kim, 2003; Hofstede & Pederson, 1999; Tang, 2006). Tang (2006) describes collectivism from the Eastern perspective as a 'group oriented consciousness,' in which those of the culture base their choice of action on being sensitive to the needs, feelings, and expectations of others in their group. This does not mean that those from individualist cultures are more selfish and insensitive to needs of

others. It simply means that they value personal freedom and the freedom of others to act independently.

Values. Cultural values are another source of socio-cultural challenge. An example of this may be observed in cultural responses regarding directness and indirectness. Some cultures, like that of the United States, value directness, urging speakers to ‘get to the point.’ Other cultures, such as Japanese and Chinese, expect the listener to infer the point from the story, illustration, or example that has been given (Gudykunst and Kim, 2003; Tang, 2006). Thus, acts that Americans may interpret as ‘beating around the bush’ or untruthfulness may have an entirely different meaning in another culture. What Americans regard as deceit, Tang asserts, actually stems from a disparity between the Chinese and American view of the value of words. Americans, she contends, are logocentric, placing great value on words as the conveyers of fact. They believe that accuracy and clarity can be carried in the words. Chinese, on the other hand, have a mistrust of words, but highly value action. According to Tang (2006), the Chinese perceive that truth (benevolence) is in action, not in words. Thus, for intercultural listeners, it is not enough just to know the glosses for various words or even the appropriate and inappropriate behaviors; to understand the deep meaning of culture, the intercultural listener must seek out a solid understanding of the cultural implications of those behaviors.

How can intercultural listeners acquire the cultural rules and values of the host community and even begin to understand the cultural implications of their behaviors? First, they must realize that theirs is not the only relevant world view; they possess an alternative logic to that of their hosts. If they want to comprehend the cultural

implications of their host's language, intercultural listeners must value, though not necessarily embrace, their host's perspective (Gudykunst & Kim, 2003; Kim, 2001; Elmer, 1993). Second, an understanding of cultural rules and values is best achieved through constant exposure. If they want to increase their understanding of the culture and their fluency in the language, intercultural listeners should increase social contact with those of the host culture.

Be sensitive to host's perspective. One strategy that facilitates the intercultural listener's adaptation to a new set of rules is that of seeking to see things from a different point of view (Gudykunst & Kim, 2003; Kim, 2001; Elmer, 1993). An anecdote by Elmer (1993) illustrates this. Elmer (1993) tells the story of working on a project in a team comprised of Westerners and Asians. One of the members of the team—and everyone knew who it was—was not doing his share of the work. Rather than single this person out, as Westerners would have done, to the dissatisfaction of the Westerners, the Asian leader criticized the whole team for not getting the work done. In the leader's frame of reference, the whole team was responsible for each other, including the slacker. Amazingly, Elmer noted, after that meeting, the project began to go more smoothly and the slacker started taking responsibility for his part of the work. Elmer imagines that had one of the Westerners solved the problem using Western rules, the Asians would have been uncomfortable, the slacker would have lost face, and the morale of the team would have declined.

In the book, *Brushko*, Bruce Olson (1977) exemplifies what happens when the intercultural listener values the host's perspectives rather than trying to impose his own. While living in a primitive culture that lacked sanitation and effective health care, rather

than enforcing his ways upon the Motilone, Olson introduced better health care practices through the person that the community considered the expert in medical affairs, the witch doctor. He made no judgments concerning the incantations that she made, nor the potions that she mixed to deal with the epidemic that swept through their village. Instead, when he himself contracted the illness, he paid her a visit and persuaded her to incorporate penicillin into her own process. When his infection cleared up though others remained sick, the witch doctor incorporated the use of Western ointments and medicines into many of her routines. Because of the trust that the witch doctor had in Olson, she was open to his suggestions regarding sanitation as well. Through valuing the host's perspective, Olson was able to open the lines of communication, improve the plight of the community, and, through the witch doctor's respect, gain membership in the community.

Increase social contact. Another strategy that intercultural listeners can use to facilitate acculturation and become familiar with cultural rules is to increase their contact with the culture. Social networks are important for intercultural listeners in that they facilitate both acculturation and proficiency in the host language (Kim, 2001; Savignon & Sysoyev, 2002). As the intercultural listener's contact with the culture increases, his facility in intercultural communication and cultural adaptation increases (Kim, 2001), his communication style begins to resemble that of his hosts (Felix-Brasdefer, 2004), and the distance between his culture and the host culture narrows (Lybeck, 2002). Lybeck (2002) found that Americans living in Sweden who had stronger, more satisfying ties to the host culture tended to acculturate more quickly and to be more proficient in the language than their more culturally distant compatriots who experienced less satisfying relationships.

Contact with people of the host culture helps the intercultural listener notice the

difference in the ways that the host culture thinks, appreciates beauty, and does things. Kim (2001) and Kim and Gudykunst (2003) suggest that in the first contact with speakers from other cultures communication is based on the stereotypes the listener has of the speaker's community or ethnic group. As the contact increases, the listener begins to shape her expectations according to what she knows of the speaker, and may even change the stereotype she has of the speaker's community and ethnic group. Through social contact, the intercultural listener learns values and norms of the host culture (Savignon & Sysoyev, 2002; Kim, 2001). Social contact also facilitates a sense of connectedness with the community (Dye, 1974; Kim, 2001) and breaks down false stereotypes (Kim, 2001; Sysoyev, 2002).

Ursa Bacon, in her book, *Shanghai Diary*, shows how through increasing contact with the culture a person updates and revises previous perceptions of her hosts. She says that before she went to China as a young Jewish girl escaping the terror of the Nazis, her image of Chinese women resembled those painted on a Chinese plate displayed in her house in Germany. When she encountered life in the streets of Shanghai, she saw no women that resembled the girls depicted in the painting. In fact, it was not until she began teaching the pampered concubines of a Chinese major that she even found anything like the painting that had formed her first impression of China.

Research Questions

The adventure of listening comprehension is one of many roles, purposes, and challenges. Does the role of intercultural listeners in the discourse—addressee, audience, observer, or over-hearer—affect their comprehension of that discourse? Does their purpose of listening—social interaction, transaction, instruction, or entertainment—

influence their comprehension in any way? Faced with difficulty in the cognitive domain, dysphoria in the affective domain, and dissonance in the socio-cultural domain, what does the intercultural listener do? Some have employed strategies to deal with the difficulties of recognizing words and grasping meaning: building vocabulary; getting translations; guessing word meanings from context; identifying keywords, the topic; getting the gist; predicting; and using a script. To deal with the dysphoria of perceived incompetence, challenged identity and self-worth, and a lack of motivation, some intercultural listeners have employed strategies such as encouraging themselves and assuming control over the listening situation. To deal with the dissonance that they encountered while adjusting to new cultural rules, it has been suggested that intercultural listeners seek to value the host perspective and increase social contact. How accurate are the sources of challenge? How useful are these strategies? Do the strategies bring certain victory over the challenges of listening comprehension or are they simply a means of enduring them? These are the questions that propel us through this adventure in intercultural listening.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

In the world of drama and of literature, personal narrative and introspection provide the backbone for great adventures. Through recording introspection in diaries, journals, and logs, explorers and adventurers stimulate interest in places that they and other adventurers would like to revisit, as well as prepare themselves for the dangers and pitfalls of the wild. This study of listening comprehension also relies on introspection. Its primary data consists of the logs of two professional EFL teachers concerning their encounters in listening to a language which they had not quite mastered while sojourning in a country whose government did not regard them as citizens.

Although some in the scientific field scorn the use of introspective records in academic discourse, a number of second language researchers have voiced their support. He (2004), for example, asserts

Through my own experience of learning English as a foreign/second language... I have been acutely aware that language acquisition requires both interaction and introspection. One must also reflect upon each interaction, make sense of what went wrong and how, and determine the optimal course of learning for each moment and each situation. (p.578)

Introspective studies are a dangerous, wild place for research in second language acquisition. A pitfall of studies in which researchers are also the subject of their own

research is that the number of participants involved in such studies is not as great as number of participants that quantitative research deems necessary to make the type of conclusions needed for generalizations about an entire population. Indeed, quantitative studies have provided a wide angle picture of the surface of the terrain. However, in the clamor of so many voices, is it possible to identify the deep issues?

Introspective studies allow researchers and teachers to understand the deeper issues of intercultural listening. Bailey's diary about her language learning experience demonstrates the value of introspection as a tool for understanding issues from the perspective of the well-informed language learner (Nunan, 1992; McDonough and McDonough, 1997). Who else could identify the barriers and boons of learning another language better than those who were in the process of doing so? As Nunan (1992) asserts, "Diary and journal entries provide insights into processes of learning which would be difficult, if not impossible, to obtain any other way" (p.123). According to McDonough and McDonough (1997), diaries, by the nature of their rich, thick, descriptive, open-ended retrospection, are an important research tool for second language teachers and learners. Atkinson (2002) proposes that introspective study is one of the most effective ways to gain entry into the heart of the human experience.

What better way than that of introspection is there for exploring the cognitive, affective, and socio-cultural aspects of intercultural listening? A dozen researchers have blazed the trail before us. Some of these analyzed multiple journals, contributing a little more definition to our knowledge of difficulties (Huang, 2005), cognitive strategies (Carson & Longhini, 2002; Goh, 2000; Gan et al., 2004; Hallbach, 1999; Leung, 2002; Schultz & Elliot, 2000) and dysphoria (Gan et al. 2004; Hart, 2000; Huang, 2005; Jones,

1994; Murray, 1999). Four studies give us entry into the heart of language teacher who returns to the arena as a language learner (Schultz & Elliot, 2000; Carson & Longhini, 2002; Jones, 1994; Leung, 2002).

Six of these studies guide us in their meticulous attention to research design. Carson and Schultz enlisted the aid of their colleagues in order to gain a more objective perspective of their personal experiences (Carson & Longhini, 2002; Schultz & Elliot, 2000). Four more studies (Goh, 2000; Gan et al., 2004; Hallbach, 1999; Huang, 2005) waded through the rich description and ‘teased out’ (McDonough & McDonough, 1997) the strategies of the participants in their studies. In order to gain an objective perspective of my adventures of intercultural listening, I juxtapose the adventures of another intercultural listener and compare the data teased from the rich descriptions that we wrote.

Prior diary studies primarily revolve around two themes: cognitive strategies and affective challenges. Only one diary study (Goh, 2002) focused specifically on listening, and that was for students whose ‘real’ listening material consisted of radio news broadcasts, movies, and an occasional teacher who was a native speaker of English. None of the diary studies probed the socio-cultural aspects of listening. None of the diary studies investigated the experience of a Westerner learning an Eastern language. In one of the first introspective studies of occidentals learning an oriental language, I will expand the themes beyond the cognitive and affective aspects of listening to include the socio-cultural aspects as well.

In investigating the intercultural listeners’ cognitive, affective, and socio-cultural responses to the demands of listening to a language that is not their own, this study

explores the introspective accounts of two intercultural listeners. The accounts were made accessible by the listeners themselves, both in public narratives sent to friends and acquaintances and a slightly less public reflection that was solicited by the researcher. Whether solicited or unsolicited, these episodes provide a window into the cognitive, affective, and socio-cultural challenges of intercultural listening and the strategies for meeting those challenges. The remainder of this chapter describes the processes of recruiting listeners, of generating listening logs, and of preparing those logs for analysis.

Recruiting Intercultural Listeners

In late fall 2006, I sent an email appeal to twenty intercultural listeners requesting their participation in this study. Nineteen were American friends who lived in China, many of them English teachers at universities. Less than half responded to the email: four to give encouragement but decline participation, four to ask questions, and one to indicate his willingness to participate. Within a month, the most willing participant left China to be with his father, who died of cancer several months later. When he returned to China after his father's death, my friend tried to continue participation, but too many other things demanded his attention. The twentieth email appeal was sent to an American friend teaching English at a university in Japan. He heartily agreed to participate and began a journal of listening comprehension as soon as the Institutional Review Board had granted me permission to carry out this study (see Appendix A, a copy of the Participant Consent Form).

I also sent an email to several Chinese friends who had expressed interest in the study. Although they were willing to participate, as language learners living in their own culture, they found it too challenging to find any regular opportunities for authentic,

interactive listening. They were highly motivated learners and found opportunities to listen to English, but these were primarily educational cassettes. These intercultural listeners dropped out of the study after one or two email exchanges. Thus, only two of us participated in the primary study: an English professor at a Japanese University, whom I will call Shadrach, and me.

In lifestyles, age, and education, Shadrach and I are quite comparable. Both of us majored in English at the same university, focusing on linguistics and teaching English to speakers of other languages. Even though Shadrach was several years ahead of me, receiving his doctorate the year before I completed my masters, we took several classes together. At the time of the study, both of us were teaching English in Asia: he in Japan, I in China. Both of us were in our mid-thirties when we began to study an East Asian language. Concerning issues of faith, religious belief, ethics, and morality, Shadrach and I are most often in agreement. Although our profession and lifestyles were similar, our previous linguistic experiences, our drive to identify with the culture, and our language learning situations were quite different.

Linguistic Experience

Both Shadrach and I had experience in learning other languages and living in other cultures. Shadrach spoke Spanish and had lived in Mexico. My previous experience in language is more diverse than Shadrach's. I grew up in Liberia, becoming fluent enough in Liberian Pidgin to follow a similar language, Sierra Leonean Krio when I visited my parents there in 1996. Growing up in Liberia, I was surrounded by many other languages and picked up a few words of Kru, of Sapo, and of Bassa by learning songs, playing with Kru-speaking children, and listening carefully in church when English

sermons were interpreted from English into one of these languages. I never attained any fluency in any of these. I also studied languages in high school, college, and seminary: 2 ½ years of French, 2 years of Spanish, and one semester each of Greek and Hebrew, but I cannot function in any of these. The first language other than English that I could use to function in society was Indonesian. For three years, I lived in Banda Aceh, but the only formal lessons I had were ten tutoring sessions during the first month. At work, I spoke English because it was my job to facilitate English in the provincial health department. A few employees attempted to teach me Indonesian, and even more attempted to teach me Acehnese. On the two occasions that I have returned to Banda Aceh, once after the first two months of studying Mandarin and once shortly following the tsunami, I was still able to ask about bus schedules and menus. Most of my conversations, though, were primarily in English.

Drive to Identify with the Culture

A few more factors put one of us at an advantage: motivation, identification with the host culture, and the language learning situation. Shadrach had already studied one semester of Japanese in the United States before going to Japan. He felt that he needed to learn Japanese because “Japanese is the language of business at this university, so there is a need to improve Japanese to be able to function better at the university” (November 1). Thus, his motivation was high and he had had some formal training in Japanese before going to Japan.

In contrast, I had less training and less motivation. My training consisted of listening to eight lessons of *Pimsleur’s Mandarin* and attending a two month intensive course in Singapore. Upon entering China, I was resistant to adaptation, quite sure that I

really did not want to be there. Language study, which many would have considered a formidable barrier, was my strongest motivation for living in China. Though not really attracted to China's history, climate, and geography, and a little repulsed by some of its culture and hygiene, I was fascinated by Mandarin. Taking on a new language, to which I had had very little exposure in spite of sharing an apartment with a Taiwanese lady for three years, also afforded me the opportunity to enter the language and cultural acquisition process once again, this time with the tools of a researcher.

Language Learning Situation

The extensiveness and intensiveness of our in-country training differed as well. Shadrach already had an intimate connection with the Japanese culture: his wife. He entered Japan with more than a nodding acquaintance with the culture and a wife who could interpret what he couldn't understand of the language. The language of their home is English. Shadrach once asked his wife to tutor him in Japanese, but realized that it was like "trying to teach a relative to drive—not a good idea" (personal communication).

Up until 2002, I had never paid much attention to Mandarin, even though my roommate was from Taiwan, the daughter of a journalist who spoke Mandarin at home. I had quite a few friends from the Mainland before entering China, but all of them lived in America. Thus, I had to rely on strangers to interpret for me until I was fluent enough to function by myself. Out of necessity, I made Chinese friends. At first most of my friends were fully bilingual and able to help me understand some of their culture. I moved three times; with each move, my friends became increasingly less bilingual. By the third move, conversation with my Chinese friends was conducted predominantly in Mandarin.

In formal language education, Shadrach's experience was quite different from

mine. His language classes, which were generally two or three hours a week, were tacked on to a busy teaching schedule. He listened to tapes and CDs on occasion. I, on the other hand, had three to five hours of language study per day, teaching during the holidays when my schedule would permit it. In many ways, this put me at the advantage, though the intensity of language study and the loss of position in the classroom made my language study a demoting experience.

By choice, I studied Mandarin in four different locations. I was hoping for a little variety in teaching styles and situations. First, I studied in Singapore for two months, at a school that is part of an international chain of language schools. The school was very form-focused, espousing repetition and grammar. In February 2003, I moved to Kunming and began studying Mandarin in a Mandarin-speaking environment. The Kunming dialect is quite different from the standard dialect of Beijing, but teachers at the university in Kunming spoke in the standard dialect, as did most of my Chinese friends and acquaintances. In August 2003, I moved to Nanjing, where the dialect is closer to the Beijing standard. I spent a year studying Mandarin at a prestigious university there. I found that the techniques were similar to those of Kunming: review the vocabulary, repeat after the teacher, read or listen to the passage, do the exercises. In August 2004, I moved to a university in Guizhou, where I immensely enjoyed the freedom to determine the curriculum and choose books and materials that interested me. At first, my teachers seemed a little reluctant to teach a class without a textbook, but they quickly adjusted; in fact, the younger ones seemed to really like it. One of the teachers started borrowing some of the materials from my class to use in teaching other foreign students.

The listening classes in these four schools varied drastically. In Singapore, there

was a listening lab in which each student checked out the tape for the lesson he or she was studying that day, then wrote in the blanks the responses they heard. The responses followed exactly the same grammatical structure, only one or two words were different. The listening exercises were exact duplications of the two-hour conversation class.

Listening class in Kunming began as the typical listening class in China: the teacher played an audio cassette, the students followed along in their workbooks, guessing the answers, and the teacher confirmed whether their responses were correct or not. After the first seven sessions, I was transferred to another class. To my amazement and relief, the new teacher was not interested in playing cassettes because, as she pointed out, the quality of the recordings is not as good as the quality of a real voice. Her listening class involved learning twenty to thirty words on a topic and using those words in sentences. When we ran out of daily topics, we moved to more technical topics of interest to members of the class, then to children's stories. It was only during the week of teacher evaluations, when someone could drop in on the class unannounced, that we even looked at the book. Our listening class also took a couple of spontaneous field trips: one to the store; the other, to a military museum.

When I moved to Nanjing, the classes reverted to typical method of foreign language listening classes in China: listen to the tape and mark your answers in the workbook. The material was not so bad; many of the questions challenged the listener to infer meaning as well as decode. The problem was that when the teacher explained the answers in Chinese, I could not keep up with him. He was clearly on a mission to finish a chapter each day whether the students understood or not. During my second semester in Nanjing, although the teacher did not abandon the tape and books, she did a better job

using them. She played the tape twice before soliciting responses from the class. She asked for several responses before confirming whether or not the response was correct. She used the students' responses as a diagnostic tool; when it seemed that no one comprehended the dialogs, she explained the situation then replayed the tape. There were still times when I fell behind, but I felt confident enough in the teacher's competence that at a time when I was cutting other classes, I maintained perfect attendance in her listening class.

In my final year of formal language study, I moved to Guizhou, a province in southwestern China. I designed my own curriculum, using the ACTFL guidelines for speaking and listening as the basis for developing the materials for my classes. I explained to the teachers what and how I wanted to study. Thus, my listening and speaking classes focused on social interaction. My teachers were very good at conversing at my level, so every class involved listening in authentic situations. I was motivated by the control I had over my learning experience. In May 2005, I took the *Hanyu Shuiping Kaoshi* (HSK), an academic test of one's ability to listen to, read, and write in Mandarin. The test is broken into three major levels and twelve minor ones: basic (1-2), intermediate (3-8), advanced (9-12). The test has five parts: reading, writing, grammar, cloze, and listening. To enter a Chinese university, the school will accept a score of 3, but advise the use of tutors. Overall, my score was 3. My highest score was in listening, 4. I think that it was the eight months of one-on-one interaction with teachers in intensive listening practice that brought about such a score.

Shadrach also explored several methods of learning language. The methods employed by his teachers included a "very prescriptive grammatical approach," the

audio-lingual approach, the direct approach, Pimsleur, and a “very loose conversational style.” In contrast to my teachers who had received formal training in teaching, Shadrach’s teachers were primarily volunteers whose training had consisted of observing experienced volunteer teachers. This resulted in some ‘less than stellar’ teaching methods. When he discovered a stellar teacher, he hired her to teach him privately for one or two hours per week. He moved away from that city to a new job, where he attended volunteer-led Japanese classes. These classes where he currently resides are less structured than those of his previous residence: no organized classes, different teachers each week, and no classmates who come on a consistent basis.

Diaries & Data Sources

Shadrach began keeping a diary specifically for this project in November 2005. Following the instructions I had given on the Participant Consent Form (see Appendix A), Shadrach kept a record of what he understood in various listening situations. He selected the situations to write about and the times that were convenient. I requested eight to ten episodes a month; in six months, he logged 52 episodes. Each episode addresses the five questions I outlined when asking Shadrach to participate:

1. Where were you? What were you doing?
2. What did you understand?
3. What did you do to arrive at that understanding?
4. What, if any, problems did you have? Explain.
5. How did this situation bolster or undermine your confidence?

In addition to the listening journal, Shadrach and I corresponded about various issues in language learning and listening. Sometimes, it was to clarify something he had said.

Other times, we discussed some point of discourse analysis as it related to our experience in intercultural listening.

I began keeping a journal of my studies and progress in Mandarin in November 2002, and continued to record my listening experiences even when the pressures of intensive language study made it difficult to write daily. Though sporadic, the journals turned out to be quite extensive, amassing over 200 pages of reflection among them. They were kept in different ways for different reasons and audiences. The main journal, which I call my listening log, was inspired by an activity in Rost's (1999) book on *Foreign Language Listening*. The assignment was to keep a record of listening situations for one week, noting what was communicated, where communication broke down, and the repair strategies, if any, that one used to communicate the message. I simply extended the assignment from one week to three years. This diary began with questions similar to those that I had asked Shadrach to consider:

1. What were the goals of the interaction?
2. How were they achieved?
3. What problems did I encounter?
4. What did I do to resolve those problems?

I kept the log in tabular form, entering each listening episode as a line on a spread sheet. (See Appendix B) By April 2006, I had written of 93 listening episodes in Mandarin and 32 in Indonesian and Acehnese.

During my sojourn in China, I also wrote regularly to friends and family about my life in China. During the first year, I wrote *Daily Adventures* (DA). In the following two years, I wrote *Weekly Updates* (WU). I also submitted a monthly report, *Qiu Jiangni*

Monthly (QJM), for the organization that employed me. This correspondence, which often included narratives about my listening, language learning, and cultural acquisition, also supplies some of the data for investigation of all three aspects of intercultural listening.

Data Analysis

Analyzing the listening journals required several different tasks in several different stages. In the first stage, from January to August 2003, I simply recorded the tasks, goals, difficulties, and strategies of my intercultural listening episodes. In August, I read through the episodes, noting any patterns of listening behavior. I added these listening behaviors as column headings in my listening log. In the following years, I made a note in the column of how I used the particular technique or contextual cue.

In April 2006, I began analyzing and comparing Shadrach's and my adventures in intercultural listening. I read through the listening logs, dividing entries according to the number of conversations, and referring to each as a *listening episode*. Each episode has five components:

1. the time and setting of the listening episode
2. a purpose for interaction
3. a role within the episode
4. challenges identified in the description of what the intercultural listeners understood and their assessment of what they thought would make them more confident in future intercultural listening endeavors
5. strategies derived from the listeners' descriptions of what they did to arrive at that understanding, what they misunderstood, and what they did

not understand at all

To facilitate analysis, I summarized all the information from the listening logs in a spreadsheet. In the first two columns, I have recorded the time and setting. The date is represented by a six digit number. The first digit refers to the year, the second and third to the month, the fourth and fifth to the day, and the last to the order in which it occurred on that day. For example, Episode 402121 was the first episode to occur on February 12, 2004. To make it easier to distinguish between excerpts from my listening logs and Shadrach's listening log when reporting the data, I have referenced them in different ways. For mine, I use the six digit classification. For excerpts from Shadrach's journals, I refer simply to the month and day, for example, April 29.

In reporting this study's findings, to differentiate between my two listening logs, I use my Chinese name, Qiu, for the Mandarin listening episodes and the name my Indonesian friends called me, Jon, for the Indonesian listening episodes. Thus, a report of the number of episodes for each journal would look like this: Shadrach, 52; Qiu, 93; Jon, 32. Shadrach's journal had 52 listening episodes; my Mandarin journal, 93 episodes; my Indonesian journal, 32.

Data Analysis included four steps. In Steps 1 and 2, I identified the role and the purpose of the episode. In Step 3, I read the listening logs, extrapolating and making a list of cognitive, affective, and socio-cultural challenges and the ways in which Shadrach and I met those challenges. In Step 4, I read the logs again, interpolating and comparing the challenges and strategies of other intercultural listeners to Shadrach's and my experiences.

Step 1: Identify Roles

The first step in analyzing the logs was to identify the role of the listener in the interaction. In labeling the role of the listener, I adapted Brown's (1995a) definition of three listening roles: over-hearer, observer, and addressee. Even though Brown (1995a) and Schober and Clark (1989) had defined the roles of addressee, over-hearer, and observer, when I began identifying Shadrach's and my roles in each episode, I found that I needed to modify the list, redefine the roles, and add other roles. To differentiate one listening role from another, I defined them according to the level of response that would be expected from the speaker, the rights the listener has to the utterance, and the recognition that the listener has from the speaker. Table 3.1 shows how these factors relate to each of the listening roles.

Table 3.1 Differentiating Listening Roles

Role	Response	Rights	Recognition
addressee	REQUIRED	YES	YES
audience	NONE	YES	NONE
observer	NONE	YES	YES
over-hearer	NONE	NONE	NONE
participant	ACCEPTED	YES	YES

The addressee is required to respond. The response may not be verbal, but the speaker recognizes the addressee as a vital part of the interaction who has full rights to the content of the message; the speaker monitors whether or not the addressee has understood. In contrast, no response is required of a member of the audience. Although the speaker acknowledges that the audience has a right to listen to his or her message, and acknowledges the presence of the audience, the speaker does not recognize each individual in the audience and does not monitor which individuals have comprehended –

or even attended—the message. The observer differs from the audience in that the speaker recognizes the observer as a part of the interaction. Like the audience, the observer is not called upon to respond, and thus, only needs to focus on listening. Whereas the observer has full rights to listen to the message, the over-hearer has none. The over-hearer is not expected to respond and is not recognized at all by the speaker. In contrast, the participant has full rights to listen to the message, full recognition of the speaker, and, if he or she wishes, full rights to respond. The participant differs from the addressee in that whereas the speaker demands a response from the addressee, the speaker acknowledges the response of a participant when given, but does not require it.

Identifying the roles of addressee, audience, and over-hearer was straightforward. When the message was packaged specifically for the intercultural listener, this I labeled as addressee. Listening in general assemblies, seminars, meetings, or church, where one is not expected to individually respond to the discourse, implies the role of audience. When the presence of the listener was unknown to the speaker, the listener is an over-hearer.

Differentiating the participant role was a little more difficult. Part of this difficulty was in the definition of the participant as a listener in a group of more than three. In such cases, the message might be specifically packaged for the intercultural listener, or it may be packaged for the other listener. When specifically packaged for the intercultural listener, he or she was an addressee. When the speaker no longer addresses the intercultural listener directly, does he or she become the audience? Both participants and audience are in situations where the message is not packaged specifically for them. However, the participant is in an entirely different situation. A participant can make a

verbal response and shape the discourse in ways that an audience cannot. Participants are monitored by the speaker even when the speaker is not packaging the message specifically for them. A speaker cannot monitor the comprehension of an audience so closely. Thus, I redefined the participant as one who is recognized by the speaker, although the message is not always specifically packaged in his or her favor, and who responds to the discourse.

Another problem in labeling the roles that occurred in situations like classrooms or meetings where the listener, although unlikely to respond, was recognized by the speaker. Sometimes, especially at first, I labeled my role in some listening episodes in the classroom as ‘audience,’ especially when I was in a class where the teacher was not likely to call on me. I vacillated between labeling these experiences as ‘audience,’ which focuses on the unlikelihood of response, and ‘participant,’ which highlights that the speaker acknowledges the presence of the listener. Clearly, I needed a label that would allow the intercultural listener to be more acknowledged by the speaker than the audience and less responsive than the participant. I chose *observer*. This role is similar to that of Brown (1995a), but my definition is tighter in that it contrasts the role of observer with participant and audience as well as with addressee and over-hearer.

One listening episode could have just as easily been labeled as over-hearer and observer. In this episode, the listener was sitting next to someone on the bus, a former partner in conversation. The interlocutor became frustrated in making conversation with someone so dysfluent, so she talked to her friends, not only shutting the intercultural listener out of the conversation, but also changing the topic and terminating the listener’s right to interaction. Should I label the role as observer or over-hearer? Because the

speaker no longer recognized the listener, I labeled this as over-hearer.

When grouping these roles for analysis, I divided them into two groups according to the expectations that speakers have regarding the intercultural listener's response: active roles and passive roles. Listeners in active roles must balance the demands of listening to the content with the demands of responding. The addressee is required to make a response, though not necessarily verbal; to refrain from responding in would be regarded as rude. Participants, also, need to respond, but intercultural listeners in this role share the burden of response with other listeners. Approximately 60-85% of the listening episodes feature the listener in an active role.

Listeners in passive roles are not compelled to respond. The audience does not have to make a verbal response, nor does the observer. The over-hearer is almost compelled not to make a response. Because listeners in passive roles do not respond to the discourse, they may focus entirely on comprehending the message. The passive roles, as a group, account for approximately 20-35% of the listening episodes.

Step 2: Identify the Purpose

Also involved in the first step of the analysis was the identification of the purpose of the listening episode. Table 3.2 summarizes the definitions that I used in differentiating the purpose as well as the settings in which they were most likely to occur.

Table 3.2 Differentiating Purpose

	Reason for listening	Typical locations
Transaction	to exchange information	stores, restaurants, businesses, office
Social interaction	to maintain relationships	parks, halls, home
Instruction	to gain knowledge or skill	classroom, auditorium, church

In identifying and coding types of interaction, I adapted Brown and Yule's (1986)

description of two types of interaction: transaction and social. They define transaction as the type of interaction we use to conduct the business of our life. Most conversations, they propose, are more social in nature, conducted in order to maintain relationships. Whereas I found this distinction quite helpful in marking the journals, I found that interaction in the classroom was sometimes social, sometimes transactional, and sometimes neither, so I formed another category: instructional. In reading the listening logs, I found a few episodes which were not interactive and, thus, had no interactive purpose; they did have a non-interactive purpose of enjoyment, so I labeled them as entertainment.

The setting of the interaction is often related to the type of interaction and quite helpful when classifying the listening episodes. Transaction occurs in stores, restaurants, offices, and any other place where people work. Social interaction occurs in parks, homes, halls, and anywhere else that people play. Instruction occurs in classrooms, auditoriums, churches, and anywhere else that people learn.

In looking at the frequency of the purposes recorded, it appears that the greatest amount of data is that of transaction. Though the proportions of transaction are not equal in our listening logs (Shadrach, 65%; Qiu, 39%; Jon, 19%), the number is very similar in Shadrach's log and my Mandarin log (Shadrach, 34; Qiu, 37). Instructional episodes are sparse in Shadrach's log (8) and my Indonesian log (6), but outnumber the episodes of transaction in my Mandarin log (41). Only 15% of the episodes in Shadrach's log and my Mandarin log are of social interaction; in contrast, the purpose of social interaction is reflected in the majority of episodes in my Indonesian log (56%).

Step 3: Extrapolate Challenges and Strategies

After identifying the roles and purpose in each episode, I read through Shadrach's listening log, my listening log, my journals and correspondence, extrapolating the challenges Shadrach and I encountered in the cognitive, affective, and social domains and the strategies we used to meet those challenges. For example, from Shadrach's log on March 28 (see Figure 3.1), I extrapolated that his main difficulty was word recognition. He used the strategies of getting a translation when the man volunteered "every day" and implied the employment of prediction and context cues, although these last two strategies did not aid his comprehension. I extrapolated that he experienced dysphoria in that he was "a little perturbed at my own inflexibility in the situation," but he implied no affective strategies. There is nothing regarding dissonance or socio-cultural strategies.

03/28	
6:00 PM-6:05 PM	
1. I was <u>chatting</u> with one of the office workers who happened to be heading the same direction.	social interaction addressee
2. Of course I understood the usual greetings.	
3. I actually don't know if I was actively trying to employ a strategy, but if I was, it was a bad choice.	
4. Following the pleasantries, he asked me a question, and I got hung up on word or perhaps it was a phrase. I <u>didn't understand the word until he said "every day" using English</u> . At that point I realized that he had asked me if I came to the office every day.	<u>difficulty</u> : word recognition <u>cognitive strategies</u> : partial translation
5. I failed to <u>use context</u> or <u>prediction</u> effectively in this case. <i>Mainichi</i> (every day) is commonly used and I knew this. If I would have focused on what I understood rather than what I did not understand, I would have likely understood because once he said <i>every day</i> in English, I understood what he had asked me. I was a bit <u>perturbed at my own inflexibility</u> in this situation.	use context (implied) predict (implied) <u>dysphoria</u> : incompetence

Figure 3.1 Entry from Shadrach's Listening Log

From my own log on May 5, 2004 (see Figure 3.2), I extrapolated that I had difficulties in identifying questions and words, and that I employed the strategy of asking for repetition. I extrapolated that I experienced dysphoria in “the weariness of extended discourse” and met that challenge by playing a game with the interlocutor. I extrapolated that I experienced dissonance in making an appropriate response to the invitation which I could not distinguish as genuine or polite. My response to this dissonance was to refrain from responding to the invitation until I could determine the speaker’s intent.

Date, setting, role	Type of interaction	Goal of interaction	How (if) achieved	Listening tasks	Obstacles encountered	Response to obstacles
May 5, train, partner	social	get acquainted	By asking	identify questions, respond appropriately	<u>unfamiliar vocabulary</u> (1)	<u>asked for the word to be repeated, “X shi shenme yise?”</u> (3)
initiator	social	get acquainted	Conversation	respond to ideas	<u>weariness in extended discourse</u> (2)	invited traveler to <u>play a game</u> (4)
Respondant	social	extend invitation	suggest visit	<u>politely decline (or accept) invitation</u>	distinguishing polite - genuine invitation	<u>no response</u> (5) to the invitation
social interaction addressee				<u>Dissonance:</u> rules of politeness	<u>Difficulty:</u> (1)Word recognition <u>Dysphoria:</u> (2)fatigue	<u>Strategies:</u> (3) partial translation (4) relax (5) value host perspective

Figure 3.2 Entry from Jonnie’s Mandarin Listening Log

After extrapolating the themes that arose naturally from the texts regarding the challenges and strategies, I compiled a list of themes from both listening logs and added these to the challenges and strategies identified in the literature. The major themes have been recorded in Table 3.3. I sorted the themes according to difficulties and cognitive

strategies, dysphoria and affective strategies, and dissonance and socio-cultural strategies.

Table 3.3 Challenges and Strategies in Intercultural Listening

	literature review	Shadrach	Jonnie
Difficulties	word recognition grasping meaning lack of experience lack of knowledge	word recognition Unexpected moves lack of knowledge incomprehensible NS	decoding drawing inference
Cognitive		use background knowledge use knowledge of grammar	Use background knowledge
Strategies	build vocabulary guess from context Translation Keywords identify topic listen for gist Predict	build vocabulary guess from context use dictionary ask wife/someone to translate ask for repetition identify keywords identify topic get the gist predict from sequence	build vocabulary guess from context Use dictionary Ask for translation Ask for repetition identify keywords identify topic Get the gist Use gesture Use context cues Use genre anticipate
Dysphoria	Incompetence role deprivation lack of motivation	perturbed Fatigue	humiliation loss of teacher role lack of motivation tired, weariness
Affective Strategies	Encourage oneself Control	manage input Relax refocus, concentrate	encourage myself play games
Dissonance	clash of rules	applying wrong script	
Socio-cultural Strategies	Value host's perspective Increase social contact		

Cognitive challenges and strategies dominated the list. Shadrach's difficulties included word recognition, dealing with unexpected moves, and lack of knowledge. The strategies he employed were using his background knowledge and grammatical knowledge, building vocabulary, guessing from context, using the dictionary, asking his wife or someone to translate, asking someone to repeat what they have said, identifying keywords and the topic, getting the gist, predicting from a scripted sequence and preemptory strike. My difficulties were in decoding and drawing inferences. The strategies I used included using background knowledge, building vocabulary, guessing from context, using a dictionary, asking for a translation, asking for repetition, identifying keywords and the topic, using gesture and context cues, using understanding of genre and anticipating what would come next.

Affective and socio-cultural challenges and strategies were not as numerous. The themes concerning dysphoria included humiliation, loss of role, lack of motivation, and fatigue from my listening log and journals; fatigue from Shadrach's journal. To deal with dysphoria, Shadrach reminded himself to relax and refocus and, when possible, managed the input; I encouraged myself to relax and, on one occasion, played games. The dissonance we encountered was not explicit in the listening logs, except for one instance in which Shadrach noted that he interpreted the discourse in a Japanese garage according to his American "cultural framework" (March 4).

Step 4: Interpolate Challenges and Strategies

After extracting all the themes, I read through the logs again, looking for evidence of the challenges and strategies that had perhaps been overlooked in the extrapolative analysis. For Shadrach's entry of March 28, it seemed that the dysphoria he felt might be

related to perceived incompetence. The issue of dissonance is not clear in this episode, although the implication of increasing social contact is certainly evident. For my entry of Episode 40505, the affective challenge is fatigue, which I seem to address through a variation of the strategy of relaxing and refocusing. The struggle over distinguishing between types of invitation reflects an attempt to value the host's perspective. For me, too, the increase of social contact is quite evident in that I had chosen to interact with strangers from the host culture.

Exploratory Questions

The analysis of the diaries and the study of the various themes regarding the challenges and the strategies used in meeting the challenges are a necessary step in preparing for the exploration of intercultural listening. Aimless exploration may be fun, but it contributes little to the journey of those who would follow in the explorer's footsteps—if they could find the footsteps. This exploration of intercultural listening comprehension is very much like a treasure hunt. The treasure may be found in the answers to these questions:

- Does one's role in the intercultural listening episode affect comprehension? If so, how?
- Is listening different in social interaction, transaction, and instruction? If so, how is it different?
- What are cognitive, affective, and socio-cultural challenges that surface, either through extrapolation or interpolation, in Shadrach's and my journals?

- How do intercultural listeners who are EFL teachers respond to these challenges?

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

Using methods of extrapolation, or pulling things out of the listening logs just as the intercultural listeners recorded them, and interpolation, or reading themes into the logs as they were described in the review of literature, this chapter will explore these four areas:

- What effect, if any, does the role of the intercultural listener—addressee, participant, audience, observer, over-hearer—have on comprehension?
- What effect, if any, does the purpose of interaction—social interaction, transaction, instruction—have on comprehension?
- What challenges did Shadrach and I record? How do these compare with the challenges identified in other studies?
- What strategies did Shadrach and I record? Is their use closely associated to a specific role, purpose, or level of proficiency? If so, how?

Roles

Table 4.1 shows the frequency with which Shadrach and I recorded episodes in the active roles of addressee and participant and in the passive roles of audience, observer, and over-hearer. By far, the most frequently recorded role is that of addressee. The active listening roles, for which the listener simultaneously listens and prepares a

response, are the most cited in the listening logs. Shadrach logs 27 episodes (52%) as addressee; I log 57 episodes (61%) for Mandarin and 18 (58%) for Indonesian. Shadrach logs 8 episodes (15%) as participant; I log 2 Mandarin episodes (2%) and 8 Indonesian episodes (26%) as participant.

The passive roles surface in about one third of the episodes. Shadrach records 5 episodes (10%) as audience, 10 episodes (19 %) as observer, and 2 (3 %) as over-hearer. In my Mandarin log, I record 17 episodes (19%) as audience, 15 (16%) as observer, and 2 (2%) as participant. In my Indonesian diary, I record 3 episodes (9%) as audience, 2 (6%) as observer, and 1 (3%) as over-hearer.

Table 4.1 Frequency of listening roles recorded in logs

	Shadrach	Qiu	Jon
ACTIVE			
addressee	27 (52%)	57 (61%)	18 (58%)
participant	8 (15%)	2 (2%)	8 (26%)
PASSIVE			
audience	5 (10%)	17 (19%)	3 (9%)
observer	10 (19%)	15 (16%)	2 (6%)
over-hearer	2 (3%)	2 (2%)	1 (3%)
TOTAL	52	93	32

It is apparent from reading Shadrach's and my listening logs that our perception of comprehension is somewhat different when listening in different roles. When in the role that required the listener to respond to the speaker, namely the roles of audience and participant, the pressure of production seemed to affect comprehension. As Shadrach hypothesized:

As an active participant in a conversation, there are much heavier demands on processing quickly and responding in a timely manner. As a passive listener, the

pressures are greatly reduced, and there is no penalty for slower processing.

(February 9)

When in a role in which the receptive skill of listening was the only process engaged, though the demands on the process were not as high, and possibly because the demands were not as heavy, the listener had to monitor attention more closely. When I was one of two interlocutors, my attention level was much greater than when I was a part of the class or an audience. Shadrach also noticed the need for monitoring levels of attention when the demands of production were removed:

When the conversation is not heavy and I know that my wife will field any difficult Japanese, one of two things usually happens; I relax and listening comprehension improves or I zone out and miss information that I probably could understand. (March 29)

Which is more likely to happen—zoning out or tuning in? By dividing the listening episodes into two groups, one of passive roles and one of active roles, we can more clearly see how the role of the listener affects comprehension. First, we will look at excerpts of episodes in which Shadrach and I assumed passive roles in the interaction: over-hearer, audience, and observer. Then, we will see how the level of concentration changes under the pressure of production when we take on a more active role in the interaction: addressee and participant.

Passive roles

The levels of concentration implied in the passive roles vary from one episode to another, especially within the roles of audience and observer. There are episodes in which Shadrach and I ceased to pay attention, episodes in which concentration seemed to be

effortless, and episodes for which there was a high level of concentration. From these episodes it is apparent that concentration facilitates and is facilitated by comprehension.

Over-hearer

In five of the episodes in which Shadrach or I was an over-hearer, concentration was facilitated by comprehension. Neither Shadrach nor I realized that we were paying attention at all to the interaction; our concentration seemed effortless. When we recognized that we understood the interaction, we continued to pay attention to what was being said.

I remember once when I was walking home from class and came upon a child and her caregiver. The caregiver was probably a nanny, but could have been a family friend or a maternal aunt, since the name *Ayi* is used to address any of these. The child and her *ayi* were talking of simple things, mainly what the child could do. I understood the entire exchange. Perhaps this was because as over-hearer, if I understood, my ears would perk up precisely because I could understand. The ability to understand was much more exciting than what they were saying, which was really of little import to me anyway.

Shadrach relates the story of overhearing a conversation at the airport between a Japanese man and a Malaysian airport employee, neither of whom could speak the other's language. The Japanese man wanted to enter through the locked doors to board his plane.

When I realized the local worker understood no Japanese at all, and apparently the Japanese man understood little or no English. I just blurted out "*mada*" (not yet) in Japanese. The man thanked me for saying this and went over and sat down next to the elderly couple. Since he still seemed a bit confused about this, while he attempted to get the appropriate information from the elderly couple, I again

blurted out “10:55” in Japanese, referring to the time that we could enter the jet way to board the plane. (November 23)

Shadrach was surprised by his linguistic ability in this situation, calling it “strikingly odd... that I (being a non-native speaker of Japanese) helped someone who is fluent in Japanese by clarifying the situation using Japanese.”

In another episode as over-hearer, Shadrach’s comprehension is not as effortless, though his concentration is high. While on a bus, he tells of a conversation he overheard between a previous conversation partner and her colleagues: “I ...understood parts of the conversation about the Christmas party plans, but certainly not the details” (November 6). A clue to his inability to comprehend surfaces in his explanation of the frustration he felt with the speaker:

She talked quickly and used quite high-level language. She was impatient with my slow replies when I didn’t understand what she was saying. Additionally, despite wanting to sit next to me on the bus, she was not good at generating conversations...all this added stress.

Many studies have theorized that affect can have an adverse effect on comprehension. Participants in Vogely’s (1999) study cited difficulty with grammar causing apprehension. This might be similar to Shadrach’s frustration with ‘high level language.’ Students in both Vogely’s (1999) and Goh’s (2001) study perceived that their comprehension was compromised when the utterance was delivered too quickly. Krashen (1981), Stevick (1999), and more recently Elkafaifi (2005) have posited that when the affective filter is up, intake is low. Their hypotheses are confirmed and their studies reaffirmed in Shadrach’s experience. Comprehension and concentration are debilitated by

negative affect.

Audience

As over-hearers, we may tune in because we understand something. As audience, there are times when we must make a conscious effort to stay tuned-in. Shadrach logged 8 episodes as audience. I recorded 13 in my Mandarin log and 4 in my Indonesian log. Concentration is facilitated by comprehension. Concerning his listening in the role of audience, Shadrach observes,

When I understood what was being said, I was focused and attentive. When I couldn't understand what was being discussed, I quickly drifted and started thinking about anything and everything, except what was being discussed at the meeting. (December 7)

I also note higher concentration levels when my comprehension was good.

After supper, I got out my Chinese computer games that I haven't played for a long time. I found that I understood a lot more this time. The game about listening for directions still louses me up, but I did make a perfect score on the 12th try. (Most of the other games I scored perfectly within two tries). I also found that I understood the dictation a little more easily this time. I usually skipped the dictation before because my attention span wasn't long enough to concentrate for 10 sentences. (October 5, 2003)

For the role of audience, we also have instances which demonstrate the effects of a lack of concentration. My attention as a member of the audience drifted, especially if I did not understand. It wasn't always an intentional decision, I just found my mind wandering to other things—including the realization I didn't understand. Shadrach also

reports at least one instance of drifting in a meeting (e.g. December 9). Whether zoning out is a defense mechanism to help the listener deal with the masses of not so comprehensible input or the result of a lack of interest, the lack of concentration leads to a lack of comprehension. Ehrman's (1999) study suggests that the students who were able to absorb all the intake without having to impose a structure on it tended to be better language learners than those who had to impose structure on everything. She also indicated a danger in accepting everything without ever imposing any structure on it. Is it possible that intercultural listeners zone out at times because they have taken in all the unstructured information that they can handle?

Zoning out, either as a defense mechanism or an indication of disinterest, is an affective response. Intense negative emotion, like the frustration Shadrach felt as over-hearer on the bus debilitates comprehension, so does apathy. In this episode, Shadrach was annoyed about having to attend the lecture on fire safety, and quite apathetic about the message:

I found myself drifting off and looking around at the scenery. Context is vital to understanding but there are times when familiarity breeds disinterest. I knew the context; I knew the purpose; I knew the procedure; I knew what was expected; I knew the level of importance (very low), but I was interrupted while I was working on something in my office, so in fact, I simply waiting for the fire drill to end so I could get back to my work. I employed no strategies and this resulted in little comprehension. (November 11)

Negative affect debilitates comprehension, but positive affect does not necessarily facilitate it. Concerning his ability to concentrate on a game show, Shadrach writes:

I realize that one of the reasons that I enjoy watching this show is that I do not have to get stressed out about not understanding what is being said, and as a consequence, I actually understand very little. The show requires very little concentration and so I do concentrate. It is clear to see which team is doing well and which team is failing. I think it is one setting where I can relax and not worry about my comprehension level because it really doesn't matter if I don't understand everything. (December 12)

The phrase, "it really doesn't matter if I don't understand everything," implies that Shadrach's comprehension does not increase when the affective filter is low. In fact, it seems that if the intercultural listener is too relaxed, neither concentration nor comprehension increases. This supports Vogely's (1999) hypothesis that anxiety, if maintained at a manageable level, facilitates listening.

Unfortunately, the relationship of concentration and comprehension is not reciprocal. Although no concentration precipitates a lack of comprehension, high concentration does not always facilitate high comprehension. An episode from one of my journals illustrates this.

The scripture exposition [for the Good Friday service] was a sermon instead of a lesson, presented by my favorite pastor, the one who writes his main points on flash cards and shows them to the congregation. I paid attention throughout the whole sermon, though I did not comprehend every single point. Actually, I didn't understand any of the main points, but I did understand that he used Peter, Judas, and Pilate as examples and I understood about 2 or 3 minutes of discourse on the crucifixion. (WU April 2, 2004)

My concentration was high, but my comprehension was minimal. Note in this episode how concentration was facilitated by comprehension. My concentration was sustained because I recognized a name, a word, or a concept in the discourse.

Observer

The inspiration for this role designation came from Shadrach's listening log. In his third entry, he related this technique of changing roles from active participant to observer when the clerk at a department store asked him a question that was not a part of the script. When he could not respond appropriately, he listened as his wife took over the conversation (November 3). Shadrach logged 10 episodes as observer. I logged 15 in my Mandarin log and 2 in my Indonesian log.

In another episode (December 9), Shadrach listened as his wife to continued the interaction with a newspaper salesman. In this episode, he surmises:

When my wife came, I understood their conversation much better. I think what is interesting about this event is that once my wife took over the conversation, I understood much better. I've noticed that this happens quite often. (December 9)

When Shadrach no longer had to simultaneously process what was received and mentally prepare how he would respond, his mind was freed to focus on what his interlocutor was saying. These episodes demonstrate how concentration facilitates comprehension.

An excerpt from my journal further demonstrates how concentration, even when it is forced, facilitates comprehension:

Thursday I had a test in listening class. It was a pop test. This teacher also avoided the word *test* and called it an exercise instead. The exercise consisted of ten

questions, written entirely in Chinese. We were to write the answers to eight of the questions based on our understanding of the recording then answer the last two questions in a personal interview with the teacher. She played a conversation for us three times about two foreigners in England ordering lunch at a restaurant. I understood very little the first time the recording was played. If I had not had the questions in front of me and a list of three words, I would have understood even less. The second time the recording was played, I understood the first line and the story told at the end, but not very much in the middle. In fact, even after the third time the recording was played, I still could not answer a couple of questions in the middle. One of them I left blank, but, in the time between turning in the written portion of the test and going in for the oral exam, I was able to process the answers to those questions as well. There were two main concepts I didn't get (one of them because I didn't understand the question), but I got most of the rest, including the retelling of the exchange between the waiter and customer when the customer was telling what he wanted to eat: "the rooster's wife's child before it is born." (*WU* March 3, 2005)

Not only did concentration facilitate an understanding of exactly what the teacher wanted us to do, it also facilitated my comprehension of the passage.

Another instance of somewhat forced concentration that led to comprehension occurred at the telephone office. It was the first time I had ventured out alone to pay my telephone bill. In Episode 402231, concentration was required to fulfill two goals: determine whether I was standing in the correct line and to figure out what I needed to say. The line was rather long and the discourse short and routine. By the time I got to the

front of the line, which I had determined was the correct one, I knew what to say.

Active roles

In the active roles of participant and addressee, the intercultural listener contributes to the discourse, shaping it and negotiating meaning with the other participants. Shadrach recorded 8 instances of being a participant and 27 instances of being the addressee. I was participant in 2 Mandarin episodes and 8 Indonesian episodes; I was addressee in 57 Mandarin episodes and 18 Indonesian episodes.

Participant

The episodes in which Shadrach or I was a participant in the interaction more explicitly demonstrates that concentration facilitates comprehension. Shadrach notes his attention level as he participated in interviewing Japanese students. Though his contributions to the discourse were in English, the Japanese teachers and students spoke in Japanese. Shadrach needed to know what questions the Japanese teachers asked and how the students responded. He said this of his attention and comprehension of the Japanese interviews:

I'm very happy to have progressed in my ability to understand these interviews. Familiarity breeds contempt inasmuch as I did zone out during the second interview for a moment, but it also breeds comprehension...if one stays focused.
(February 25)

An excerpt from my correspondence further illustrates the effect of concentration on comprehension: "A couple of days in class this week, I noticed that I sustained concentration for about 20 minutes. During those 20 minutes, I could follow most of the

conversation” (*WU* March 3, 2004).

Among the episodes of participatory listeners is also a reference to the effect of affect on comprehension and concentration:

The Bible study was also an interesting dance of English and Chinese. All of us prepared our homework, which was to study John 15:10-12 and write an application for it. We had a good discussion, in Chinese (for the non-English speaking Korean participant) and English. This Chinese was a little more challenging than what I can do in Chinese, but the discussion was also in English, which kept the frustration level low and the attention high. (October 9, 2003)

Even though the level of Mandarin was far beyond comprehensibility to me, being able to revert to English reduced the frustration level and increased concentration. Whether or not I achieved the optimum level of good tension that Vogely (1999) suggests is imperative for comprehension, I could not ascertain. It is possible that even though the Mandarin was challenging, my reliance on English might have made me too relaxed. I certainly focused more on the content than on the way that utterances were formed in Mandarin.

These instances of participant listeners, levels of comprehension and concentration do not seem to differ too much from that experienced in the passive listening roles. There is little indication that either listener feels any pressure from having to simultaneously process the message and formulate a response. Maybe the pressure is not as great since the intercultural listener in this role has the option to participate and does not always feel that there is a need to make a contribution to the conversation.

Addressee

In the majority of listening episodes, Shadrach and I were addressees. Shadrach was addressee in 27 episodes; I was addressee in 57 Mandarin episodes and 18 Indonesian episodes. In the role of addressee, the effect of simultaneous production and reception is more apparent. In general, in the episodes of addressees, the intercultural listeners are more likely to confess to lower comprehension and higher concentration. Although there are some instances of opting out, none of the episodes of addressees tells of tuning out or zoning out.

When I am the sole respondent in a conversation, I am not likely to employ the negative strategy of not listening. My mind is not likely to wander, even if there is very little comprehension. This is illustrated in an anecdote that I related in my personal correspondence:

I was the only one who showed up for music class this afternoon. It was actually a good experience. I had to pay attention to what was being taught because the teacher kept confirming that I understood what she was saying. We didn't talk about the mechanics of music, but of the different cultures in China and the dances, songs, and number of ethnic groups within each of the five regions. She taught me a song from the Western region (near Nepal & Pakistan), for which I recognized all but five of the characters. I haven't quite got the full meaning of the song yet, but I did get the gist of it. After practicing the song until I could sing it back without much help, we watched a music video of that song as well as several others from the region. (*DA* April 24, 2003)

It was a fascinating class, one I still regard as the best introduction I was given to Chinese

culture. Although I did not have to make a verbal response, I did have to produce a response so that the teacher could confirm my comprehension. Comprehension was minimal, but concentration was high because I could not politely refuse to concentrate while under the constant scrutiny of the interlocutor.

Shadrach's experiences as addressee also show much higher levels of concentration, although comprehension is not necessarily greater. He tells of a transaction at a garage in which he thought he had ordered a part, but discovered that the mechanic was asking for a vital piece of information that he had not yet provided.

Contrasting Active and Passive Roles

Language labs, listening classes, and 'authentic' listening materials offer intercultural listeners ample opportunity to play the role of over-hearer (Brown, 1995) and of audience; perhaps, on occasion, they may also be observer. However, as we see from Shadrach and me, at least two intercultural listeners who live in the host culture are more likely to engage active roles in listening. We watch TV, listen to the radio, and watch movies, but this is not where the real action is. The real drama of listening comprehension is in responding to language and co-creating texts with those from the host culture. How can we as intercultural listeners prepare ourselves to execute the roles of participant and addressee more effectively? In our role as observers, what shall we observe? In whatever role we assume, how can we train ourselves to focus?

In their study of the effect of various roles on comprehension, Schober and Clark (1989) found that addressees had a tremendous advantage over over-hearers. However, in examining Shadrach's and my listening logs, I found that the situations we reported as over-hearers and the situations we reported as addressees do not explicitly show this. As

over-hearers, except in one case where Shadrach missed the details of the Christmas party, we always reported full comprehension. Of course, these were short exchanges, whereas the over-hearers in Schober and Clark's study had to make sense of much longer discourse. It may also be that we only selected the cases of overhearing in which we understood since generally, if we didn't understand and it was not important to us, as is usually the case in overhearing, we tuned it out without even recognizing that we had an opportunity to hone our listening skills. Our reports of episodes as addressees far outnumber the reports as over-hearer. Though we have more occasions of inadequate comprehension as addressees, we also report more strategies to remain attentive. An observation by Carson (in Carson & Longhini, 2002) brings this into perspective. She reported that she was less likely to tune out of a conversation that she was not following when she was the addressee. Thus, it seems, that outside Schober & Clark's experimental world, it is a choice to pay attention, not the opportunity to shape the discourse that governs our comprehension as over-hearers and addressees.

Purposes

What effect, if any, does the purpose of interaction have on comprehension?

Table 4.2 shows the frequency with which listening episodes were characterized by social interaction, transaction, instruction, and entertainment. Apparently, there are no trends in this regard; not even my own listening logs reflect consistency. Of Shadrach's 52 episodes, 34 (65%) were transactions, 8 (15%) were social interaction, 8 (15%) were instruction, and 2 (4%) were entertainment. Of my 94 Mandarin episodes, 41 (44%) were instruction, 37 (39%) transaction, 14 (15%), and 1 (1%) entertainment. My Indonesian journal shows an even different configuration: 18 (56%) social interaction, 6 (19%)

transaction, 6 (19%) instruction, and 2 (6%) entertainment.

Table 4.2 Frequency of listening episode according to purpose

	Transaction	Social	Instruction	Entertainment	Total
Qiu	37 (39%)	14 (15%)	41 (44%)	1 (1%)	93
Jon	6 (19%)	18 (56%)	6 (19%)	2 (6%)	32
Shadrach	34 (65%)	8 (15%)	8 (15%)	2 (4%)	52

Although it is difficult to determine how the purpose of interaction affected the quality of comprehension, it is quite clear that the purpose affected the way in which the intercultural listeners processed what they heard. For social interaction, a global understanding of the topic and the speakers' intent seemed to be more important; thus, the listeners often engaged in top-down processing. They noted difficulties with word recognition, but they were more likely to complain that they could not process the speaker's message as quickly or as efficiently as they would have liked. For instruction, since the listeners through preparation had familiarized themselves with the topic, they were more focused on identifying the words. Thus, instructional episodes show that listeners tended to engage bottom-up processes. In transaction, the listeners seemed to rely on previous experience and to have expectations regarding a scripted sequence. From previous experience, they knew that their conversation followed a prescribed routine and they were familiar with that routine. Their familiarity with the routine enabled them to listen for familiar words and phrases, thus integrating top-down and bottom-up processes. In grouping the episodes according to transaction, social interaction and instruction, the different ways of processing becomes more apparent.

Transaction

A large portion of episodes recorded in the listening logs were transactions.

Shadrach logged 34 transactions. I logged 37 in Mandarin and 6 in Indonesian. Clearly, Shadrach's purpose of learning and using Japanese is a transactional one. Regarding his reason to study Japanese, Shadrach wrote: "Japanese is the language of business at this university, so there is a need to improve Japanese to be able to function better at the university" (November 1).

Indeed, a great proportion of Shadrach's listening diary related episodes of transaction. Faculty meetings, interviews, purchases, and newspaper boys all offered occasions for Shadrach to practice his transactional listening. It is not difficult to find references to transaction in his listening log. This episode, in which Shadrach needed to confirm a hotel reservation, provides an example of a transaction:

We tried to make the reservation using the Internet website, but we didn't know if we could reserve a non-smoking room, so I decided to call ... Later I had to cancel the reservation that we made at the first hotel. (November 7)

In this transaction, he is at work:

This is a monthly meeting. Everyone is expected to attend. The meeting is a venue for providing information to faculty members. Issues are raised and discussed. The meeting also acts as a place where summaries of other committee meetings are provided by various faculty members. (November 2).

Transaction was a close second to instruction in my Mandarin listening log. In order to survive in the country, I paid bills (402231), bought tickets, hailed cabs, called the landlord (401221), made hotel reservations (402111, 410081), asked for directions (302281). What frustrated me most was that after a year of very intensive lessons in Mandarin, I still did not know how to ask to speak to someone on the phone.

A number of these transaction episodes either implied or explained the use of a routine conversational exchange. These routines were attained through personal experiences and applied during the interaction. These are elucidated on a couple of occasions in Shadrach's log. According to Shadrach, "The order procedures at restaurants are scripted in Japan" (November 3). Having scripted procedures facilitates Shadrach's comprehension while ordering a pizza during a tennis match:

In regards to ordering a pizza, the text is basically formulaic. The first question is always, "Would you like to order;" the second question is, "What is your address;" the third question is, "What is your phone number; the next question is, "What would you like to order;" that is followed by details about your order, and then your order is repeated. The person then asks if it is okay to proceed with the order, tells you the price and that it is going to take "X" amount of minutes before your order is delivered. (November 11)

In my log, also, it is my experience with a particular routine that helps me understand and prepare to listen for details. For example, in Episode 410041, when calling a hotel to ask to be connected with friends, although I wasn't entirely familiar with the exact routine, I was not surprised when I heard a string of numbers. When it was too many numbers to be that of a hotel room, I correctly deduced that I had been given a telephone number that would directly connect me to their room.

Again, in Episode 410111, when I went to the market to buy vegetables, I was already familiar with the routine:

Vendor: *Ni hao! Ni yao mai shenme?* [Hello, what would you like to buy]

Shopper: *Mai X xuyao dou shao qian?* [How much does X cost?]

Vendor: # *mao yi jin. Ni yao dou shao?* [# cents per pound. How much do you want?]

Comprehension in this situation required integrating the numbers obtained through bottom-up processing into the scripted sequence, an activation of top-down processes.

It is apparent that facilitating episodes of transaction in the classroom could be very beneficial for intercultural listeners. It aids them in achieving interaction between top-down and bottom-up processes, which is assumed to be what differentiates successful listeners (Tsui & Fullilove, 1998; Schnell, 1992) and readers (Carrell, 1987) from their not so successful classmates. Perhaps because teachers and curriculum designers intuitively realize this, Brown and Yule (1983) can observe that many of the books used in second language classrooms focused on transaction rather than social interaction. Judging from the number of transaction episodes that Shadrach and I recorded, as well as the proportion of those episodes in which we did not understand exactly what the speaker meant to convey, it appears that such textbooks may be what intercultural listeners need.

Instruction

The greatest proportion of episodes in my Mandarin log related the challenges and strategies of instruction. I had 41 instructional episodes in my Mandarin log and 6 in my Indonesian log. Shadrach logged 8 instructional episodes. My chief occupation during the first two years of my sojourn in China was language study. While Shadrach was attending meetings, I was in the classroom. More often than not, I needed to understand classroom discourse. I struggled with understanding lectures, classroom tasks, homework assignments, and instructions. The presence of such a large proportion of episodes in an instructional setting implies that teachers should continue to be cognizant of and continue

to explore ways to help intercultural listeners gain proficiency in academic listening.

It seems that many of the instructional episodes are processed from the bottom up. This is reflected in statements such as “easily understood the word for fire” (Shadrach, November 10), “rely on the text” (Shadrach, December 6), “unfamiliar vocabulary” (Qiu, 403241, 403121; Jon, 301271) and ‘lack of vocabulary’ (Qiu, 301281). Although these phrases occur in transaction and social interaction episodes as well, in instruction, it seems to be the chief difficulty. Of Shadrach’s 8 instruction episodes, 4 (50%) made reference to glitches in the bottom-up processes. In the 34 transactions, there were only 3 (8%) that made reference to bottom-up processes. In social interaction, there were none.

Of my 41 instructional in Mandarin episodes, 24 (58%) made reference to difficulties in bottom-up processing. Four of the 6 episodes (66%) of instruction in Acehnese make reference to bottom-up processes. In instructional episodes for both languages, it is often an unfamiliar word that contributes to difficulties in comprehension. The proportion of unfamiliar words hampering comprehension in social interaction and transaction is much lower. My comprehension was hampered by unfamiliar words for 6 of the 18 social interactions (33%) in Indonesian, 2 of the 6 transactions (33%) in Indonesian, 5 of 14 social interactions (36%) in Mandarin, and 10 of 37 transactions (27%) in Mandarin.

Social Interaction

Whereas my purpose for living in China was language study, my purpose for going to Indonesia was entirely different. This is reflected in the high proportion of episodes of social interaction in the listening log. I recorded 18 episodes of social interaction in my Indonesian listening log, and 14 in my Mandarin listening log.

Shadrach logged 8 episodes of social interaction.

The social orientation of my Indonesia log is clarified in an excerpt from a letter I sent to a friend:

I went to Aceh to use my own hands and feet and stammering tongue to offer words of comfort. One evening, as I knelt silently beside a grieving widow, listening to the hollow sounds of her dirge and the rise and fall of her children's voices as they read the Koran, I realized that it was not great pearls of verbal wisdom that the people of Aceh sought from those across the sea. They needed the presence of friends with fresh ears to listen to their heart's cry. (March 1 2005)

I needed to see how friends and acquaintances fared after the tsunami. For the fun of it, and also because of its value in renewing relationships, I eagerly accepted lessons in Acehese. Kak taught me to count in Acehese or reinforced the lessons of "jep jep ie"(would you like a drink?), the interaction took on the character of instruction.

My log of Indonesian and Acehese listening episodes records a score of social interactions. Playing cards, talking to friends, and listening to the discourse of tsunami survivors all presented opportunities for social interaction. A typical social episode which replayed itself a number of times was this one:

Bisa bahasa Indonesia? (Can you speak Indonesian?)

Bisa. Sidikit, sidikit. (Yes, a little)

Bisa bahasa Aceh. (She can speak Acehese)

Bisa bahasa Aceh? (You speak Acehese?)

Bacut. Bacut. (A little)

From there we would go through the greetings, numbers, and anything else I could say.

Unlike the tightly scripted sequence of transaction, social interaction allows for a variety of topics. For the intercultural listener, this means a less secure sense of expectation. When I went to the market, the topics were rather finite: vegetables, fruits, price, and weight. Even when I made phone calls to the hotel clerk, the topics were finite: price, reservation, and room number. Whereas many of the complaints for transaction gone awry were unexpected additions to the script, those of social interaction were non-understanding because of an inability to establish the topic.

After the initial greetings and customary getting acquainted questions (e.g. Hello, how are you? Where are you from? Can you speak the host language?), the topics of social interaction are infinite. If the intercultural listener nominated the topic of the interaction, their expectations regarding the response of the interlocutor might be a little more accurate. However, when the intercultural listeners cannot establish the topic or determine the speaker's intent for selecting the topic, comprehension is difficult. This difficulty is noted in a couple of Shadrach's episodes of social interaction. He could not understand a colleague: "He asked me a question and I did not understand a word" (November 17). He encountered the same thing at a dinner party: "It was very difficult to understand his questions" (March 3).

For me, too, social interaction was difficult. On a couple of occasions, I could not hold up my end of a conversation in the park because I could not identify the topic. On one occasion, I was reading a book and could guess that the original greeting was an observation that it was too dark to read the book (403271). I could not understand the utterance that followed. On another occasion, I walked by a couple of workers who were

relaxing. One called out to me and asked where I was from. For the next two minutes, he tried to converse with me, but it was not until I was walking away that I realized he had been talking about American politics (403051).

The Effect of the Purpose of Interaction on Comprehension

In social interaction, there was some difficulty with recognizing words, but usually it was the entire utterance, or perhaps a difficulty of identifying the topic that caused the most difficulty. This suggests that intercultural listeners in social interaction are most likely to use top-down processes to comprehend the message. In instruction, the high focus on words and the text implies that students and even language teachers focus on bottom-up processes in the classroom situation. The top-down and bottom-up processes seemed to be most interactive for Shadrach and me during transactions.

How does the interactivity work? Shadrach described the interaction of the processes: “I listened for keywords and used my background knowledge...to gain understanding” (February 25). Decoding the keywords is a bottom-up process. The activation of background knowledge prepares the listener for the top-down process.

Many of the studies on the interactive processes in listening comprehension, based on Carrell’s (1988) proposition concerning text-boundedness in second language reading, have found that listeners rely too heavily on bottom-up processing (Tsui & Fullilove, 1998; Schnell, 1992). Perhaps it is the design of their studies. The central instrument for obtaining data is a test: assessment is primarily an instructional concept, not often employed for transaction or social interaction. Furthermore, it seems that trained language instructors are text-bound when listening in intercultural settings. Thus, it may be that if we as instructors want to facilitate interactive processes in intercultural

listening, we should provide more natural contexts for doing so. Transactions, it seems, in their prescribed routines and finite scripts offer fertile ground for intercultural listeners to become more proficient in interactively processing what they hear. By simplifying the task of making the processes interactive, we can more effectively focus on the other challenges of intercultural listening.

Challenges

The listening logs reveal several major sources of cognitive, affective, and social challenges and suggest a number of strategies for meeting those challenges. The discussion of the challenges and strategies across all three domains of intercultural listening will focus on these two questions:

- What challenges do Shadrach and I record? How do these compare with the challenges identified by other studies?
- What strategies do Shadrach and I record? Is their use closely associated with a specific role, purpose, or level of proficiency? If so, how?

Difficulty

Table 4.3 summarizes the challenges in the cognitive domain as gleaned from the literature review as well as the listening logs. A star (★) indicates that the source was identified in at least one-tenth of the episodes in Shadrach's or my listening logs or was discussed theoretically and bolstered by qualitative or quantitative research as related in the literature review. A check (✓) indicates that the source was mentioned by the listening log or literature review, but is not discussed in any other research. A question mark (?) indicates the listening logs and literature review only imply that the source

exists.

Table 4.3 Challenges in the Cognitive Domain

	Literature Review	Shadrach	Jonnie
Word recognition	★	★	★
Inability to grasp meaning	★	✓	★
Lack of experience	?	★	✓
Lack of knowledge	?	✓	✓

Word recognition and grasping meaning are noted by the literature review, by Shadrach, and by me as a major challenge in the cognitive domain. Grasping meaning is noted in my listening log and the literature review as a challenge. Shadrach's journal does not refute this; he was more specific in identifying the source of his inability to grasp meaning: a lack of knowledge and a lack of experience; Shadrach noted that his non-comprehension was due to unexpected moves, a subset of lack of experience, and, on occasion unfamiliar structures, a subset of a lack of knowledge.

Lack of experience and lack of knowledge are implied in the literature. Anderson & Lynch (1988), Mendelsohn (1994) and Rost (1990) all propose that inadequate comprehension occurs when the listener cannot make links between the text and prior experience. Buck's (2001) discussion of scripts also implies that listening comprehension does require a certain degree of experience within a situation in order to construct a script. Can these four sources of cognitive challenge—poor word recognition, inability to grasp meaning, a lack of experience, and lack of knowledge be linked to a passive or active role, or to a specific purpose of interaction?

Recognizing Words

One of the most difficult tasks for intercultural listeners, and one of the greatest

accomplishments, is being able to understand the words their interlocutors use. The importance that word recognition has on interaction is noted in this excerpt from some of the correspondence in my first year in China:

At supper tonight and on the bus ride home, I made a new friend. Her English is less fluent than my Chinese, so our conversation was mostly in Chinese. She told me about her family and asked me where I lived, where I was from, and other friendly questions. Some of the conversation was routine enough that I could understand easily, but half the conversation was spent negotiating the meaning of various words, some of which I never did figure out. (*DA* July 8, 2003)

The challenge of unfamiliar vocabulary is not limited to one purpose of interaction. Unfamiliar vocabulary made it difficult to understand utterances in social interaction. In Episode 403271, an episode previously cited to describe social interaction, I could not understand an utterance that a stranger addressed to me because I did not recognize the words. Shadrach recounts a situation in which he, too, could not understand an utterance because of a particular word: “I got hung up on a word or perhaps it was a phrase. I didn’t understand the word until he said, ‘every day’ (March 28).

In transaction, poor word recognition is also challenging. At a health screening, Shadrach relates, “There were a couple of words I didn’t understand. One of them the word for side, the other...weight” (February 15). In the other transaction, “There were two or three words that were repeated frequently that I didn’t understand” (November 8).

Poor word recognition made it difficult to adequately perform tasks in class. In Episode 404011, I record, “Unfamiliar vocabulary made it difficult to identify good sentences [that my classmates constructed].” On another occasion, I thought I recognized

a familiar word, *yifu* (clothes), but in the context of the dialog, it did not really make sense. In this case, *yi* was a number and *fu* was a measure word for *hua*, a word that I seemed to have missed on account of misrecognizing the two syllables before it. I think that if I had read the word, I would not have made this mistake. Regarding the other vocabulary, I noted, “some new; some I didn't recognize in the spoken context” (403121). In Episode 403241, unfamiliar vocabulary rendered “only partial understanding of message.” Shadrach also struggled to identify words in instructional situations. He tells of one evening lesson where “there was one word I couldn't understand; the word was *kikkake*” (November 4).

Neither is the challenge of word recognition relegated only to one type of role. In an audience of worshipers (Episode 302271), I encountered the difficulty: I heard the word *shenti* several times during the communion. I knew I should recognize it, but it was not until some time later that I recalled its meaning. As an addressee of an utterance in the park, poor word recognition was just as troublesome; in this case, I didn't recognize anything but *Meiguo*, which means America (403271). In a friendly chat as addressee, Shadrach encountered an utterance for which he “didn't understand a word” (November 17). As observer in a weekly faculty meeting, “there were two or three words that were repeated frequently that I didn't understand” (November 8).

It is apparent that a difficulty in recognizing words greatly challenges the intercultural listener's comprehension, whether in passive roles or active ones, whether in transactions, social interaction, or instruction. It is not surprising that it dominates both Shadrach's and my listening logs. These findings are consistent with the other research regarding listening. Bacon (1992), Gan et al. (2004), Goh (2000), Schnell (1992), and

Vogely (1995) all found that word recognition was a major challenge when listening to a language that is not yet one's own.

What feature of words makes them so difficult to recognize? Is it a problem of identifying the pronunciation, as Celce-Murcia et al. (1996) and Morley (1992) imply, or of intonation, as Mendelsohn (1994) has suggested? Shadrach mentioned intonation as a specific cause on only one occasion (November 17). I noted in my journal that people thought that I could not understand because of their accent (405021), but I felt that my lack of comprehension had more to do with my own lack of vocabulary.

As for having difficulty with word boundaries, Shadrach and I did not seem to have the problems that Mendelsohn (1994) and Flowerdew & Miller (2005) suggest. Shadrach never identifies this as a potential problem in his log. Because of the nature of Mandarin, my difficulties in determining word boundaries were not as previous listeners have encountered (Carson & Longhini, 2002; Flowerdew & Miller, 2005; Goh, 2000; Huang, 2005). This may be due to the nature of language. There is no ellipsis or reduction of syllables in Mandarin. On a rare occasion, I might have had difficulty grouping syllables together, such as in the *yi fu hua* episode (404011); however, outside the classroom and possibly the church sanctuary, few words were longer than two syllables.

Did our poor word recognition stem from memory? On occasion, Shadrach and I shared the problems that listeners in Goh's (2000) and Schnell's (1992) studies identify. In one episode, Shadrach explicitly identifies this as a challenge: "My cognitive processes got hung up on one word, which I had heard before but couldn't remember" (March 7). It was not an uncommon experience for me to hear a word and recognize that

I knew the word, but have difficulty accessing its meaning.

From my listening logs, it seems that my troubles with poor word recognition declined slightly—and my memory perhaps improved slightly—as my exposure to the language increased. In later episodes, I still recorded episodes in which an unrecognized word challenges comprehension, but the episodes were not as frequent as in the first month in China when in practically every episode I indicated a problem with an unrecognized word. Vogely's (1995) study also notes a slight decrease in preoccupation with word recognition as the students had more exposure to the language. Even after six years of exposure to Japanese, Shadrach struggled with word recognition. These observations from Shadrach's and my listening logs and Vogely's study seem to indicate that training in decoding strategies is crucial for students at the beginning stages, but never ceases to be a need across all levels of proficiency.

Grasping Meaning

Though word recognition was a definite challenge noted in my listening logs, I was more likely to skim over decoding and focus on the meaning. I was annoyed when a Singaporean associate advised me not to be so concerned with meaning. What is the purpose of listening if I cannot understand what the speaker wants me to know and do? Very early in my language learning, in the first hour and a half of intensive Mandarin instruction, I listened intently for what the teacher expected of me, trying to figure out what I was supposed to do. When she finally acquiesced to speaking two sentences in English to elucidate the pattern of the activity and help me grasp the meaning of the activity, the last hour and a half of non-stop Mandarin was more comprehensible.

Episode 303111 is an incident in which I thought I knew the words, but still had

trouble discerning the meaning. At the time I was living in the foreign student hotel, where we had been promised internet connections very soon. Thus, when my door was unlocked (an annoying habit of the employees at this hotel) and I heard *keyi wan shang* (you can use the internet), I thought that they were going to test the internet connection. However, when they brought in sheets, I realized that I had failed miserably in grasping the meaning of their words. Through having this conversation weekly, I did eventually learn to recognize the word for bed, *chuang*.

In Shadrach's journal, there is also the struggle to ascertain meaning from the utterances around him. It is implied in every episode whether he is in a meeting making notes of the "dates of additional events that were taking place at the university" (November 2) or at the restaurant interpreting the "ordering procedure" (November 3). In one episode, he relates that he understood most of the words but could not understand the meaning (December 5). Although Shadrach is implicit about grasping meaning, he is more explicit than I about how a lack of experience or a lack of knowledge causes non-comprehension.

Lack of Experience. Intercultural listeners often relate what they hear to previous experiences that they have had. Usually, this is a tremendous aid in comprehension. Thus, when a listener lacks experience, processing the listening episode could be quite difficult. In Shadrach's case, he noted that in some cases he had the experiences for certain transactions, such as going to the store, but when some element is added to that, like a cashier asking for something that no cashier has ever asked him for (November 3), the unexpected move is disorienting. In this episode, Shadrach philosophizes about how an

unexpected move made comprehension difficult when participating in a test at the hospital:

Another interesting facet of this event is that when an [unexpected] word or phrase comes up...in a second language situation, the learner can be thrown for a loop. The question about my weight caught me off guard. I've heard the word for weight a dozen times and I even know the *kanji*, but because I didn't expect to hear that word, the question remained incomprehensible to me. (November 8)

I, too, encountered a bit of a problem with a cashier and an unexpected question (404031). Even though I understood the words and the request, it took me a while to process the meaning. In my case, I had paid my phone bill, giving the cashier more than enough to cover the bill, when she asked if I had a five. I looked confused enough that the cashier said, "*mei wenti*" (don't worry about it) and gave me my change. As I was walking away, I realized that she had asked me that question because, had I had a 5 yuan note, she could have given me a higher denomination bill as change. I was just beginning to realize that it was a part of the scripted sequence of cashiers in China. After this incident, I noticed how often cashiers and even vendors asked that question.

Several researchers have found that experience is important to understanding the spoken word (Bacon, 1992; Schultz & Elliot, 2000), but none of these has referred to it in such a specialized way as Shadrach and I have done in these examples. None of them really pinpoints the role of expectations. Schultz & Elliot (2000) point out that familiarity with the genre gives one a frame of reference. Bacon (1992) reported similar findings; in her study the listeners were able to construct meaning based on their knowledge of advertisements. Shadrach, however, in couching the concept in terms of

expectation, has narrowed the field considerably. He implies that certain conversations (checking out, ordering at a restaurant, paying bills) have a routine about them, and a deviation from that memorized routine, as we see from both Shadrach's episodes and mine, can be a little disorienting to the intercultural listener.

Lack of knowledge is another source of cognitive challenge. Just as intercultural listeners interpret utterances in relation to other experiences, they also relate the utterance to previous knowledge. The listening logs elucidate two types of knowledge intercultural listeners use: general knowledge and grammatical knowledge.

Shadrach points out the preeminence of using general knowledge in order to understand utterances:

I want to emphasize the importance of prior knowledge of the theme when it comes to understanding. I understood the sections of the meeting where I had some background knowledge. This was especially true when the meeting turned to the discussion of the candidate who had been interviewed on Monday. For all practical purposes, I understood virtually everything. That is not to say that I understood every word or even most of the words, but I had enough background knowledge to allow me to make fairly accurate predictions. I want to clarify that I couldn't predict how the members felt about the candidate, but I could predict what points were under discussion at any particular time. (December 9)

For me, the role of prior knowledge was most evident in the most difficult texts I encountered: sermons at church. Knowing the Bible stories and the motives and methods of preaching as I do, I was able to put together something from the sermon. In fact, when listening to my friends preach, I was at an even greater advantage because they would

often use personal experiences to illustrate a point; I could relate to the people and themes of those personal experiences.

This ability to understand better with prior knowledge of the topic is not unexpected. We could have predicted it from the studies of Carrell (1987), Headlam(1990), and Reynolds et al. (1984). Their approach is slightly different than that which Shadrach and I take in our logs. They focus on how a lack of knowledge causes non-comprehension. Maybe because we did not yet know what we did not know, Shadrach and I took a more positive approach, noticing how much more we understood when we had prior knowledge.

Shadrach's journals highlight a second type of knowledge that many intercultural listeners rely on: grammatical knowledge. In grappling with meaning, Shadrach's reflections display a deep sensitivity to meaning as conveyed through grammatical structure. He regarded mastering complex grammatical structure as "imperative...to improve my comprehension" (December 9), and identified "simply listening to native speaker constructions" (March 6) as one means of doing so. Essentially, he considered the lack of knowledge about grammatical structures a blockade to his comprehension:

I think it was the grammatical structures of the register that made [the faculty meeting] so difficult to comprehend. The pragmatic hedging and associated constructions made me very confused. Also, the lexical choices became more formal as well. I also noted that the speed of the language also increased in the tense atmosphere. This combination of elements doomed my comprehension right from the start (January 30).

My listening log is not replete with references to grammatical structures, but

perhaps conspicuous in its lack thereof. My earliest instruction under the audio-lingual method made me a bit of a rebel against all grammar lessons. I did not ignore them. In Kunming, I often explained the technical linguistic jargon to my classmates. However, a year later, when the book stopped using English to explain Chinese grammar, and none of my bilingual Chinese friends could adequately explain, my disgust with Chinese grammar was sealed. I decided that if I were to learn any more Chinese grammar, it would have to be by absorption.

It could be that the grammar of Chinese is simpler than that of Japanese so that I could actually absorb what I needed to know. I never had reason to attend a meeting in which the formalized register might be used. Even at church, I suspect the language is of the people; the pastors do not employ flowery constructions to teach spiritual truths. Maybe the church language is formal, but I'm not fluent enough or sensitive enough to notice the difference in registers. In addition, the basic sentence structure of Chinese is quite similar to English: the subject precedes the verb, which precedes the object. More complex sentences can be a bit daunting at first, but conversation rarely uses these complex constructions so they are not likely to be encountered while listening. This contrasts sharply with Shadrach's experience: "Japanese grammar is tremendously counterintuitive to native speakers of English. Sentences generally conclude with the verb and modification tends to follow the nouns rather than precede them" (personal communication).

However, my attitude toward grammar was probably due more to a lack of motivation. Listeners in both Bacon's (1992) and Vogely's (1995) studies, like Shadrach, noted an attempt to use their knowledge of grammar to grasp the meaning of an utterance.

They were not studying a language that is as grammatically complex as Japanese; they were studying Spanish. I chose not to study grammar because, after being burned out on grammar in Singapore, I simply did not regard the formal study of grammar as detrimental to my language acquisition. I figured I could learn it intuitively—as I had first acquired English grammar.

The sources of difficulty in the cognitive domain are not limited to a particular role or type of interaction. Word recognition is a problem in both active and passive roles, and in social, instructional, and transactional interaction. The episodes recounted in grasping meaning were transaction, but I also had difficulty grasping the meaning of instructional utterances (302061; 402201; 402161; 402162). The classroom routines and exercises in China were not unfamiliar, so, most often, it is a lack of knowledge that hampered comprehension.

Cognitive Strategies

Table 4.2 lists the types of strategies the listener might use to recognize words and arrive at a meaning for the utterance. A star (★) in the column for literature review indicates theoretical, qualitative, and quantitative research has identified the strategy. Those marked by the star in the columns marked “Shadrach” and “Jonnie” are mentioned in at least one tenth of the episodes in the corresponding listening log. Those marked by a check (✓) in the literature review have been identified in theoretical discourse, but perhaps not explored experimentally. A check in the columns for Shadrach and me indicates that we mention using the strategy, but not often. A question mark (?) indicates that something in the literature review or listening logs implies the use of the strategy.

Building vocabulary was mentioned in the literature review, but not very

prominently in the listening logs. Guessing words from context was prominent in all three sources. Getting a translation was mentioned in Hsiao & Oxford (2002), but not discussed too much otherwise in the literature review; in the listening logs, it was one of the most frequently mentioned strategies, even divided into three categories of using a dictionary, getting a partial translation, and getting a full translation. Listeners in previous research mentioned using keywords as do I; Shadrach mentions it more. Identifying the topic and listening for the gist were both rather prominent in the literature review, but hardly mentioned in the listening logs. Prediction was also noted in all three sources. The logs show different types of cues that aid in using prediction: scripted sequences and contextual cues. We can also observe whether the use of these strategies seems to be associated with an active or passive role, a particular type of interaction, or a particular level of proficiency.

Table 4.4 Cognitive Strategies

	Literature Review	Shadrach	Jonnie
Build vocabulary	★	✓	?
Guess from context	★	★	★
Get translation			
Dictionary		★	★
Partial Translation		★	★
Full Translation	✓	★	★
Use keywords	✓	★	✓
Identify topic	★	✓	✓
Listen for the gist	★	✓	✓
Predict	★		
Apply scripted sequences		★	✓
Use contextual cues	?	✓	★

Key: ★ prominently mentioned ✓ mentioned ? implied

Build Vocabulary

Building vocabulary is a strategy that was mentioned as useful for instructional

settings and transactions. The need for such seemed to be most noticeable when the intercultural listener is an addressee. In all four episodes that it is mentioned or implied, the listener is an addressee.

Building vocabulary is needed to deal with cognitive challenges in instructional interaction. Shadrach mentions the need for this strategy in relation to an instructional episode in which he was the addressee: “I would also like to mention that I again became aware of the need to significantly increase my Japanese lexicon.” I generally noticed in class my need for more vocabulary, but was usually too overwhelmed by the vocabulary lists that would be on the test to give much attention to the words that truly interested me. I did, however, make time for my more practical strategy in regard to vocabulary learning.

Particularly in my first few months in China, I implied a need for this strategy in transactions. For example, the first time I went to a post office in China (302221), I looked up a couple of words in the dictionary before going, but did not take the paper with me. On my way to the post office, I rehearsed the first few lines of what I would say. A few days later, I used the strategy again. After the second roommate had moved out, I thought it was a good time to ask for a private room (302241). Once again, I consulted my dictionary, looking up the words I thought I might need to convey such a request. I stumbled through, understanding more meaning from the clerk’s gestures and tone than from the actual words she used, but successfully completed the transaction.

Honestly, I do not know that this strategy actually helped me in listening comprehension. One of the first conversations I initiated in Mandarin was a request for directions to the church (*DA* March 2, 2003). I rehearsed “*jiao tang zai nar?*” several

thousand times before I asked. My request was understood, but I had forgotten to rehearse the possible responses. I recognized a couple of words, but never heard the words for left or right. After hours of wandering around the city, I gave the address to a taxi driver on Sunday morning. It was an old address; the church wasn't there anymore. I asked the question again, but still hadn't rehearsed the words of landmarks and possible replies. The next lady that I asked for directions realized I didn't understand her answer and gestured for me to sit down and wait a minute. She led me to the church.

Later, during the fourteenth month of my sojourn, I employed this strategy again. On an exploratory trip to Guizhou, I wanted to collect some information that was far beyond the power of my meager vocabulary to produce, so I drafted a questionnaire into English then asked a language partner to help me translate it into Mandarin. My original intention was to interview the pastors and check off their answers. However, I found that they had difficulty understanding me, so I gave the questionnaires to the pastors and asked them to write their answers themselves. When they had completed the questionnaire, I asked a couple of follow up questions concerning what projects the pastor did to help widows and orphans (*WU* May 8, 2004). I understood their answers: send them to school. It seems that building vocabulary in this way is marginally successful.

I believed that this way of building vocabulary would eventually work for me; even after two years in China, I was still trying to make it work (501221). When a leak in my bathroom was so bad that I had to hold an umbrella when sitting on the toilet, I made up a list of words that I would need to inform my landlord of the problem. I also anticipated words that he might use in response to my plight. I looked up the words for

leak and ceiling, rehearsed putting them in a sentence, took a deep breath then called the landlord. It took him two days to respond, but I did hear how the secretary at his agency used the words. I also recognized them over the next week of conversations in which he laid the blame on the neighbor. Three weeks later, when he finally located a person to repair the leak, I still remembered the words and recognized them in the conversation with the plumber. To make this strategy of building vocabulary truly useful for listening comprehension, it would be useful to investigate how learners increase their receptive vocabulary.

The need for building vocabulary is evident, implicit in the unanimous identification of poor word recognition as a major challenge to comprehension. However, there is little consensus on which particular technique to do this. Shadrach's language learning device of reading captions on television to increase his weather vocabulary is somewhat reflective of Leung's (2002) strategy of extensive reading to increase vocabulary. The technique of making vocabulary goals in the sense that listeners in Gan et al.'s (2004) study used them is not recorded in either listening log. I do not remember reading of my technique in any book, but I do remember seeing it modeled for me. On a family vacation to Cote D'Ivoire, when our car broke down, my father memorized the phrase "I have a broken radiator" and "I need a mechanic" as we drove into Danane. For him, as for me, it was a quick fix for a situation, and its ability to build our listening vocabulary rather dubious; perhaps that is why it has not been advocated in any scholarly research.

Guess from Context

A second strategy for getting the meaning of words is to guess them from context.

Listeners from previous research projects have reported using this strategy. Its use and usefulness is also recorded in Shadrach's and my listening logs for transaction and instructional purposes, in both active and passive roles.

For Shadrach, it is sometimes a useful strategy, sometimes not. His least successful use is described in this entry:

There were two or three words that were repeated frequently that I didn't understand. I don't know why I didn't write these words down, but I was employing a "guess from context" strategy to see if I could derive the meaning. This strategy failed, so I would have been better off writing down the words and looking them up. I should have written down the unknown vocabulary items and then tried to guess them from context. This would have been a much wiser strategy. (November 8)

In instructional settings when he has an active listening role, Shadrach seems to employ this strategy more successfully. Once he was forced to guess the word from context because the word was not in his electronic dictionary: "I made some guesses and thought I had figured it out. I was actually wrong, but I was in the neighborhood" (November 4). Another time, he was more successful at guessing from context. "I took a guess at what question was intended and managed to get [the meaning of the word] right. The word meant "kind" as in, "What kind of department are you in?" (March 7).

I often employed the strategy of guessing from context and have neither recorded nor can I recall any incidents when using this strategy failed me. Sometimes, I learned a new word through using this strategy, particularly in a familiar context like choir practice at church. In Episode 305272, I guessed the meaning of the phrase, "ready, set, go." The

choir director used it often before our breathing exercises. In fact, a transliteration of the phrase into Mandarin would not work at all. However, I knew from her actions and from experience what she wanted me to do. I also learned church phrases from context, particularly when singing hymns that I had memorized in English. I learned the word *rong yao* 榮耀 (glory) the first time we sang the chorus to the *Battle Hymn of the Republic* (305272).

Generally, while listening to sermons, I relied greatly on my knowledge of the Scriptural context and the church context to figure out the meaning of a word. For example, in Spring 2004, I heard a sermon in which the pastor often said “*Lasalu*.” *Lasa Lu* was the name of a street in the city that the church was on, but I couldn’t figure out what connections that would have with the sermon. I hadn’t yet figured out the topic and the pastor was jumping from one passage of Scripture to another, so I had also lost my bearings in that respect. As soon as I heard the names, Mary and Martha, however, I knew that he was not talking about a street, but about a person, Lazarus.

The previous episodes recorded my use of the strategies in church, which I have designated an instructional setting. In one of the episodes of interpreting Indonesian conversation, I used the strategy in a social context. In one man’s narrative of the tsunami, the context of the extended discourse helped reactivate some of the words that I wanted to use but had forgotten. I wrote, “This extended talk, mostly in Indonesian, on a topic of great interest (and human interest) contributed to some great strides in reactivating words like *lakukan* (doing), *karena* (because), *tetapi* (but)--that I’d struggled to remember” (50208). During the month that I was there, guessing the meaning of words from context facilitated the retrieval of vocabulary that had been relatively

dormant for ten years.

How is it that this strategy of guessing words from context has been applied with inconsistent results? One time, it works for Shadrach; another time, it doesn't. I never recorded an incident in which it did not work, possibly because I did not recognize that it was not working or possibly because I recognized the situations when it was most useful. Vogely (1999) suggests that sometimes listeners use strategies inappropriately. Shadrach (November 8) clarifies this situation when he guesses from context rather than writing down the words he does not know.

When is an appropriate time to use this strategy? Nation (2000) suggests that the opportune time for readers to guess from context is when they recognize 95-98% of the text. Perhaps this same principle applies to listening: when the listener has a relatively firm grasp of context in which he is listening, guesses about the meaning of an unfamiliar word are more likely to be accurate. A note of the frequency of the use of this strategy as I recorded it in my log seems to support this assertion. Assuming that my fluency and word recognition increased as my experience and knowledge of the language and culture increased, I should have had a firmer grasp of the context in later episodes than in earlier episodes, thus facilitating successful guesses from context in my later entries. My log shows this trend. In the first forty-one episodes, I reported using this strategy only 1 time; in the middle forty-two episodes, 6 times; in the final thirty-four episodes, 14 times.

Translation

A third strategy for getting the meaning of words is translation. In my listening logs, I note three ways of obtaining a translation for a word or phrase. One is to look it up in the dictionary; one is to ask someone to translate the full utterance; one is to identify a

troublesome word or phrase within the utterance and ask for a partial translation. Table 4.5 shows the frequency with which Shadrach and I reported looking up words in a bilingual dictionary, asking for a partial translation, and asking for a full interpretation. I have split the Mandarin listening log roughly in thirds to show a possible difference in use over time. Qiu A includes the first forty-one episodes from January through December 2003. Qiu B includes forty-two episodes from January through May 2004. Qiu C includes the last thirty-four episodes, which span from August 2004 through April 2006. Except for Hsiao and Oxford's (2002) study, which simply lists translation among the strategies of language learners, none of the other studies even mentioned using translation. This is probably because of the design of the other studies: listeners did not have the opportunity to ask for a translation. Thus, this study could possibly be the first glimpse into how intercultural listeners use their dictionaries, be they electronic, paper, or human; how frequently they use them; and how effective using them was for the intercultural listener's comprehension.

Table 4.5 Frequency of translation types

	N	Dictionary	partial	full
Qiu A	41	3	5	6
Qiu B	42	3	5	4
Qiu C	34	9	5	2
Japanese	55	3	7	3
Jon	33	0	2	1

Dictionary. In the first twelve months of listening to Mandarin, I reported using a dictionary 3 times in 41 episodes; in the next eight months, 3 times in 42 episodes; and in the final twenty months, 9 times in 34 episodes. Shadrach reported using his dictionary 3 times in 55 episodes. I did not use a dictionary at all in Indonesia.

The increase of use on my part and possibly the paucity of use on Shadrach's part

could stem from the complexity of the non-alphabetic languages that we studied. To find a word in a Chinese dictionary, one must know what the character looks like. Thus, if one heard the word, *shi* then looked it up in the dictionary, one would find over thirty characters, including five which are typically introduced in the first few Mandarin lessons: 是 (is), 十 (ten), 时 (time), 事 (event, appointment), 石 (rock). Two other characters for *shi* would also be included in the list of thirty characters even though they collocate with other characters; these two would also be encountered in the first week: *laoshi* 老师 (teacher) and *kaoshi* 考试 (test). As I became more knowledgeable about Mandarin, I was able to use my dictionary more successfully. I began studying Mandarin with an Oxford starter dictionary, but found that most of the words I wanted to know were not there. I also bought a stroke order dictionary, which I found a little more useful for finding the meaning of Chinese words, but could not look up a word in English. During my 13th month of language study, I bought an electronic dictionary. Because I bought it in China, even the menu was in Chinese, and quite often the definition of Chinese words were given in Chinese characters. For one who finds looking up words in the English dictionary annoying, using the Mandarin dictionary in a conversation had no appeal. Only for one transaction, when I was buying a printer and had no fluent Chinese speaker with me, did I carry along a dictionary for a transaction.

Since, as in Mandarin, it is difficult to know which character to choose when typing in the phonetic representation of what one hears in Japanese, Shadrach used a dictionary to confirm his guesses. In his response journal, he has noted the use of a dictionary as “a confirmation tool for my guesses” (May 6). He makes a guess about the English equivalent, looks it up in the English portion of the dictionary then notes whether

or not the word he has heard is listed.

How useful is using a dictionary for listening comprehension? Perhaps, if used as Shadrach has suggested, as a confirmation tool for guesses, it might reinforce the meaning of the words. However, Shadrach also points out how dictionaries can be more of a distraction than a benefit in this episode, which was used to describe transaction:

I used to bring my [electronic] dictionary to the meetings, but I found this made me lose focus even faster because I looked up words that I heard and then tried to imagine how and when such words could be used. All the while, the meeting sped along” (November 2).

Partial translation. From the data, it seems that my use of partial translation is somewhat evenly distributed across Mandarin episodes: I asked for a partial translation 5 times in each section. I asked for a partial translation in Indonesian in 2 episodes. Shadrach reported requesting 7 partial translations in Japanese.

A partial translation would be one in which I asked my interlocutor to translate one word or phrase into English. In my listening log, I note: “usually with this language partner I get an English gloss as soon as I say I don't understand. When she repeats the whole sentence in English, I haven't gained anything, but I feel I do gain when it's only one word (40329).” In one episode, my language partner told me a story about a cat that changed its color by [?]. I repeated the word I had heard. She supplied the word ‘paint’ and continued the story.

One of my teachers at Nanjing employed this strategy of partial translation, occasionally interspersing a keyword in English in her Mandarin lecture. I found it tremendously helpful for my comprehension, but in talking to my English speaking

classmates, discovered that none of them noticed that she was doing it. One of my teachers in Guizhou did the same thing. In this case, I was the sole addressee and all that I had to do was furrow my eyebrows and she would provide the English gloss when she knew it. About half the time, she did not know the English gloss, but she could come up with a synonym in Mandarin that I recognized.

A second type of partial translation would be that of reading in English while listening to discourse that is in the host language. I did this frequently at church, reading a bilingual Bible while listening to the sermon. I heard the words being read aloud, was able to relate them to the characters, and then could relate the characters to the English. Shadrach records the employment of a similar use of the English text while listening to Japanese: “My strategy in this seminar is to rely on the text (written in English) when in doubt. Each presenter follows the text because our goal is to understand natural language semantics better” (December 6).

Full translation. When partial translation was not enough, if available, Shadrach and I asked for a full translation. My use of full translation decreased over time from 6 in the first 41 episodes, to 4 in the next 42, to 2 in the last 34. In my Indonesian log, I recorded using this strategy once. Shadrach reported using it 3 times.

For Shadrach, translators are more accessible. Sometimes he asks for a full translation of an utterance, and, after that utterance, asks for no interpretations of succeeding utterances. Two examples of this hybrid of partial-full translation occur on November 1 and March 3. The first was during a faculty meeting: “I try to sit next to one of our Japanese department members, so if there is something that I feel I need to know about, I simply ask him/her a question in English. I asked my Japanese colleague two

questions at this meeting” (November 1). The second occurred during a dinner conversation in which Shadrach was not able to figure out his conversation partner’s question, either in Japanese or English, until another dinner guest interpreted into English. The conversation continued in Japanese (March 3). On another occasion, when he couldn’t understand what a colleague was asking him, although the colleague had repeated himself, Shadrach turned to his wife for a full interpretation. During an interview to promote the university where he works, Shadrach relied on the interpreter after his non-comprehension of a question that, under normal circumstances, he could have easily understood.

I most often used this strategy in transaction. When I bought my first cell phone and most of my major appliances, I asked a friend to come along to interpret for me. This was also helpful in that they could do the bargaining for me as well. In listening to their conversations, I could understand most of what was said, especially regarding the price and the functions, but I wasn’t confident enough to ask the questions myself.

My use of full translation decreased over time. This could have easily been due to a lack of availability. When I lived in Kunming and in Nanjing, I had fully bilingual friends who could give me a reliable, trustworthy interpretation of incomprehensible discourse. At church, before I sat in the choir, I had a friend who would sit outside with me and interpret the sermon. Later, one of the other choir members wrote the English interpretation and gave it to me after church. In Guiyang and Hainan, I had no bilingual friends or teachers. The episodes in which I asked for a full interpretation occurred when I was talking to one of my bilingual friends on the phone.

Although I have found interpretation strategies the fastest and most effective for

communication, they are not necessarily the fastest for learning. Simultaneous interpretation divides my attention between two speakers, and, most often, I focus on the interpretation rather than the Chinese message, perhaps picking out a few words in Chinese that I already recognized. I found this true when watching movies as well. If the movie had English subtitles, I'd read the subtitles rather than listening to the Chinese. While watching English movies with Chinese subtitles, I completely ignored the subtitles. I discovered that the best way for me to learn from movies was to play the movie in Chinese first without subtitles, then watch it a second time in English. The full translation was essentially a means of confirming my guesses. I learned the words *youguai* (monster, troll) and *luzi* (donkey) and the phrase, *women dao le ma?* (Are we there yet?) from guessing their meaning while watching *Shrek 2* in Mandarin and confirming the guesses while watching the movie a second time in English.

This last incident, which sounds very similar to Shadrach's observation that he used the dictionary to confirm his guesses, may indicate that a combination of the strategies of guessing from context and translation aid intercultural listeners in increasing their receptive vocabulary. Guessing from context seems to be useful, but confirming those guesses through translation seems to have longer term effects on retention.

Although the strategy getting a translation is not likely to occur in instructional episodes, it occurs quite frequently in transaction (e.g. Shadrach's colleague interpreting parts of a meeting for him; friends accompanying me to buy appliances) and relatively often in social interaction (e.g. Shadrach asking his wife to translate). Typically, when the strategy is employed, the intercultural listener takes a passive role in the interaction.

Keywords

The strategy of listening for keywords is usually employed in both passive and active listening roles and generally aids in the quality of comprehension. Shadrach mentions it prominently for transaction. I do not mention it frequently; when I do, I report using it as addressee in transaction or observer or audience in instruction.

Shadrach refers to the technique of using keywords as an aid to comprehension on five occasions. For all five, the purpose was transaction. In one, he was in the audience during a job interview. He describes the strategy in general terms: “My strategy was to try to guess the question by identifying words (December 9).” In two others, he was the addressee in a phone conversation. This time he identifies the key word:

The strategy I used on the telephone was to listen for key words. It was one key word in particular ...*harimasu* does not bring visions of visitors coming to my office, but I had heard that word one other time in a similar context via telephone. In the earlier case...I found that he had come to my office. (January 31).

Shadrach used the same strategy and same key word on February 1. In the third episode to employ this strategy, he was an observer for student interviews conducted both in English and Japanese. He once again describes the strategy in general terms: “I listened for key words in the questions and used my background knowledge of the testing procedures to gain understanding” (February 25). In the last episode, he was once again addressee, this time he was supposed to take a message for his wife: “My strategy was to listen for particular words in the string of words that were flying by (April 19).

Likewise, I use the words I recognize in a stream of speech to fashion an interpretation of sorts. Not long ago, I received a call from a friend’s mother. It was the

first time I had ever talked to her, but when she spoke my friend's name, it was enough to evoke the information that I needed to interpret the transaction. My friend was supposed to be on a flight coming in from Uganda. In the course of the conversation, I picked up several other words that suggested my friend had not arrived. I also understood from *dianhua* (telephone), *bu neng shuo Zhongwen* (can't speak Chinese), and a string of numbers that began with a country code for Africa that my friend's mom needed me to call the number and see what I could find out about her daughter (60418). The strategy was also helpful during a test, when I listened for key words that I had read in the questions (404081).

Only on one occasion did the strategy not aid in my comprehension, but in this case, I had misinterpreted the keywords. Early in my sojourn in China (303111), I confused the request to change the sheets *keyi zhuan chuang* with information that I really wanted to hear, *keyi wan shang* (you can use the internet). In this case, the misconception was quickly corrected by using other strategies for grasping the meaning of the utterance.

Identify the Topic

Identifying the topic is a pivotal strategy for grasping meaning. Whether in class or in church, if I could catch a few of the phrases and match them to a common topic, I could arrive at some sort of understanding about the lesson. Shadrach makes the same observation, "if I understood the main topic, I managed to follow the conversation at least a little" (November 6).

I generally employed this strategy for longer discourse when I was in a passive role. On one occasion (510100), it helped me understand the movie, *The Italian Job*. I

correctly deduced from the opening scene that the main character was a thief and that the theme of the movie would be about a heist. On another occasion, a friend had given me a VCD (601010). Although I could identify some of the Scriptural references, I could not determine the topic of the recording and, thus, could not understand anything.

Shadrach uses the strategy in a passive role for extended discourse. He recounts using it for meetings, where he was in the role of audience:

My strategy was to try to guess the theme of each part of the meeting. This was sometimes successful and sometimes not successful. I found that when I couldn't understand the topic of discussion from the start of that point, I could understand very little about what was being discussed. That is even to say that I often understood most of the words being used by an individual but absolutely could not contextualize and so remained lost. (December 7)

From these episodes, it appears that identifying the topic cues the intercultural listener as to what script or schema to activate. When the listener fails to accurately identify the topic, the chance of accurately interpreting the utterance is lost.

Listen for the Gist

Listening for the gist was frequently mentioned in literature review as a strategy to help listeners grasp the meaning of an utterance, but was not often reported in the listening logs. When mentioned in my logs, among the last ten episodes, I was the addressee in transaction, either determining the procedure for procuring a parking pass (510291) or understanding the intent of my student's request (5011011). Both episodes were accompanied by gestures which were probably more responsible for improving the quality of my comprehension than getting the gist of the utterance. For Shadrach, too, it

is difficult to determine whether listening for the gist actually improved the quality of his comprehension. It seems to be an implicit part of his listening process: “I was happy to shake off the brain freeze, refocus, and get the gist of where the doctor’s questions were going” (March 7).

This may be a strategy more successfully applied by advanced language learners. I do not mention it in any episode for the first thirty months of listening to Mandarin. An observation by Shadrach implies that it is a strategy more easily manipulated by advanced listeners; contrasting his response to a temporary loss in focus in Japanese with English, he writes, “In English, I can always right the ship without too much difficulty...by focusing on the discourse and deriving the gist” (February 25).

Predict

A seventh strategy for grasping meaning is prediction. Two valid questions that the intercultural listener could ask are, “Predict what?” and “How?” The listening logs indicate that a couple of cues aid the intercultural listener in making predictions: scripted sequences and contextual cues.

Scripted sequence. A scripted sequence is a somewhat predictable conversation. In our listening logs, the scripted sequences were generally for transactions: ordering food at a restaurant, checking out of a grocery store, and buying postage stamps, for example. Scripted sequences can be a tremendous aid to comprehension. As Shadrach observed, “Ordering food at restaurants in Japan tends to follow strictly followed routines, which made comprehension relatively easy when ordering pizza” (November 11). In another episode, Shadrach concluded that by using a scripted sequence to

interpret an utterance, he “actually understood everything” (March 5), but he downplayed this level of comprehension by observing, “Nothing out of the ordinary occurred so it was really not a difficult strategy.”

Shadrach describes using scripted sequence, albeit a more difficult type of scripted sequence in conjunction with several other strategies. The episode of December 5 was also cited as an example of using keywords to grasp meaning: “[I would] try to guess the question by identifying words, and then, if the question was understood, I could possibly predict what might be said” (December 5). This combination of strategies improved the quality of his comprehension. Shadrach identified the questions as being difficult to understand, but he had a firm enough grasp of the discourse that he was able to discern the sophistication of the applicant’s language, and have his assessment confirmed by his Japanese colleagues.

In China, it seemed that every restaurant had its own scripted sequence, as well as every hotel. This was a detriment to my comprehension. When calling one hotel, I could be connected to the room. However, when I asked to be connected to Room 401, the hotel clerk seemed to have no idea what I was asking for (402121). The lack of a scripted sequence led to poor comprehension on both of our parts; it took four calls to finally be connected. At another hotel in another city, when I called the hotel and asked to be connected with a room number, I was given the phone number for the room (410041).

The one script that remained similar was buying bus tickets from the airport. Because of my familiarity with this script, I could identify the amount of money I needed to pay for the ticket and answer my cell phone at the same time, making arrangements to meet someone (402062). The phone conversation was in English.

Context cues. Only a precursory glance of either Shadrach's log or mine gives the impression that understanding the context of the social situation is quite important for listening comprehension. To resolve difficulties in word recognition, Shadrach and I guessed a word from context. In using context cues for prediction, Shadrach and I guessed the meaning of an entire utterance. Using context cues focuses on understanding the speaker's ideas and involves the use of paralinguistic cues such as elements of the script, of the environment, and of gestures.

In the absence of scripted sequence, the intercultural listener's prior knowledge and previous experience with various situations or context can provide cues for comprehension. Shadrach explains his reliance on scripts for comprehension in this episode:

I met a person when I entered the high school who told me something (like you need to see someone or go somewhere), but I really couldn't understand his message. I didn't intend to ignore what he had told me but opted not to tell him that I couldn't understand what he told me. Instead, I went to reception (in the exact opposite direction in which the man had pointed) because that is what I had done every other time I had gone to a Japanese high school. This worked just fine, but I was a little concerned that the fellow I had "ignored" might think I was disrespecting his advice, when in fact, I was merely opting for a more familiar script to follow. Once again, when things followed an expected pattern, I was able to handle the language and when diversions from the expected patterns occurred, I lacked understanding. I guess I need to once again think about more possible outcomes while predicting. (November 13)

I found that when I was familiar with the script, even when I was insecure about accuracy in word recognition, I was able to grasp the major concepts. During the Fall 2004, in one of my classes we watched a movie about a clash of Chinese culture and American culture. It was an American movie, set in America, but shown in Chinese with no subtitles. Having the background knowledge concerning the legal and social systems in the US, I was at a tremendous advantage. I was familiar with the genre of social action films such as the one shown in class and was able to understand the movie.

Prior knowledge and experience facilitates comprehension in that it allows the listener to anticipate what will transpire in the transaction. Because I could predict the flow of a phone conversation with the landlord's secretary (501242), I could understand how the landlord would respond to my request even when I did not recognize all of the words. Based on my knowledge of the situation and my previous experiences with my landlord, when he finally came, I could predict the issues addressed in his conversation with my upstairs neighbor (501243).

Whereas the cues from the script give a blueprint regarding the organization of information, gestures and environmental cues aid in confirming some assumptions. Entries from my listening log also reflect an underlying assumption that the use of gestures is important in interpreting the message. In my early attempts at comprehending Mandarin, when my vocabulary was very limited, I noted that I often read body language and environmental cues to make sense of what was going on (303111, 302241). On Thanksgiving Day 2004, when the building superintendent showed up at my door the first time and asked to read my water meter, I understood very little of what he said to me, but, from the ledger in his hand and the columns of numbers next to names and dates, I

was not surprised when he asked me for money. Since he had just read my meter, I could safely assume that he was collecting the water bill. When he asked for more money and showed that the residents of other apartments had also paid 15 yuan, I figured I was paying a management fee, though, to be honest, there was little evidence of the place being properly managed.

Shadrach also made assumptions regarding a person's reason for coming based on the tools of their trade or the clothes that they wear. Referring to several occasions in which a stranger has come into his office, he writes:

I never know what is going to be checked because my comprehension is poor, but from his uniform and the fact that he usually has some kind of measuring device, I know that he has come to check something in my office and it probably is beneficial—perhaps he is checking for some poisonous gas. In any case, I always agree that he can come in check things. (personal communication)

Early on, I found that my previous experience and knowledge regarding church choir was very helpful. Even though I had only been in Kunming a few months, I could tell by the director's tone of voice that she didn't like our posture, breathing, or the way we were singing a particular phrase. I cannot say exactly what it was that she said, nor even paraphrase it, but I did know that she wanted us to open our mouths wider because it gave a better sound. She wanted us to stand up straight with our feet positioned for the best balance. Like all choir directors, she wanted us to enunciate, singing our vowels clearly and creating crisp consonants. These are messages that I interpreted based on my familiarity with the setting. I wrote, "Without knowing what the speaker's exact words were, from similar experiences with similar types of speakers (the music minister at my

church), I could guess the intent (get choir to produce a pleasant sound) and infer the meaning of her language. I could check whether I had comprehended adequately by watching the reactions of the other choir members: are their lips a little rounder, their mouths open a little wider? Are they standing up a little bit straighter?" (DA March 2003)

Sources of Dysphoria

The difficulties in word recognition and grasping meaning are like a rock in the path; they may cause the intercultural listener to stumble over short periods of non-comprehension and miscomprehension, but the injury is seldom substantial. Dysphoria is like a wall; depending on its height or intensity, it distracts the intercultural listener and slows down (or shuts down) cognitive processes. Table 4.6 lists the affective barriers to effective intercultural listening comprehension.

Table 4.6 Challenges in the affective domain

	Literature Review	Shadrach	Jonnie
Fatigue	?	★	★
Perceived Incompetence	✓	?	★
Challenged Identity/ Self worth	✓		★
Lack of Motivation	★	✓	✓

Key: ★ prominently mentioned ✓ mentioned ? implied

Shadrach and I both noted fatigue as a prominent challenge in the affective domain. This was not a prominent theme in the literature. Perceived incompetence and a challenged identity were mentioned in previous research and noted prominently throughout my listening log and journals, but was not mentioned by Shadrach at all.

Fatigue

Fatigue is Shadrach's most cited source of challenge in the affective domain. It

influences his ability to comprehend as addressee in an instructional episode:

Despite understanding most of the afternoon session, I was a little bit down due to my abysmal speaking performance. Frustration stemming from other comprehension skills can have a negative effect on overall performance. Put another way my listening ability was negatively affected by my poor speaking ability. The evening session was much, much better. I was physically and mentally in better condition. My mind was sharper and more focused and this resulted in a very fruitful evening session. (November 6)

He also describes how fatigue affected his comprehension in an episode for which the purpose was transaction:

It was interesting that during the previous visit, I understood most everything, but on the occasion, I struggled a lot. I believe this was due to the fact that this happened on Friday after a very busy week and I was weary. I really don't think that the acupuncturist had made his questions more difficult, but it was simply a case of my tiredness (February 17)

Fatigue was no stranger to me either. Many stressful situations were either a product or result of fatigue. Fatigue made it difficult to concentrate. In my listening log, I used the phrase, "weariness in extended discourse" (405051), to describe how I felt when concentrating for a long time but understanding very little of what is being said. In this particular episode, I had spent more than three hours trying to be sociable with the three people who were also assigned to my train compartment. It was not only the social situations that were affected by fatigue. Class was especially tiring. On a good day, I could concentrate for three hours. Usually, though, I started looking at the clock about

9:30, anticipating the end of class. I was overwhelmed by the pace of teachers who were, as Shadrach described one of his teachers, in his response journal “clearly on a mission to finish a chapter each day whether the students understood or not” (April 20). By the end of the semester, I was “fatigued, [without] enough energy to keep up (WU June 4, 2004).

Fatigue slowed down my ability to process utterances. In Episode 605061, I had been up until 3 o’clock the previous night, feverishly finishing a previous draft of this dissertation. At 9 o’clock in the morning, I taught an English study group for a small group of friends. Before the group, I was visiting one of my friends in her home; in such situations, we use Mandarin. She made the observations, “*tianqi lei*,” words that I knew I should recognize, but, in my tiredness, did not decode for another fifteen minutes. As I was writing a vocabulary list on the board, I remembered that the word, *tianqi*, which I’m sure I must have encountered three and a half years ago, meant weather.

As prominent as the theme of fatigue was in Shadrach’s and my listening logs, it is a surprise that none of the other studies either in listening comprehension or educational psychology mention it. Reading between the lines, one could infer that listeners in Maracle & Richard’s (2000) and Spielmann & Radnovsky’s (2001) studies experienced fatigue. Maracle & Radnovsky’s evaluation of the intensive program included a suggestion for more periods of rest. Spielmann & Radnovsky (2001) mentioned that their intensive program included *peri-curricular* activities to help students deal with fatigue. Neither of these studies investigated the effect of fatigue on the students’ performance. Clearly, as is evidenced in the listening logs, fatigue is an impediment to listening comprehension.

Perceived Incompetence

Another challenge in the affective domain, which I felt probably contributed more than a little to the fatigue and was exacerbated by stress, was incompetence. Shadrach expresses this situation quite eloquently:

When I was in graduate school, we used to joke about Krashen's model of comprehensible input calling incomprehensible input in a second language $i + 2000$. At this meeting, I often feel like it really is $i + 2000$. (November 2)

Shadrach describes the effect of incompetence leads to anxiety and anxiety to a lack comprehension:

During the first phone conversation, when the price quoted to me on the phone was higher than the Internet rate, the hotel staffer queried me about the rate. She then started asking me questions that I couldn't comprehend or was unable to process due to the additional tension.

These two episodes and a third in which being "burdened" to generate conversations caused "additional stress [that] hindered my participation further" (November 6) are the only hints that Shadrach ever thought of himself as incompetent.

Having attained a reasonable measure of success in school before my study of Mandarin, I would not have imagined that I would think of myself as incompetent in the classroom. Constant failure changed this. A feeling of incompetence dominated my entire second and third semesters of language study. In Episode 402161 I was frustrated because I could not understand the instructions. In another instance, "I missed an exercise because I didn't understand that it was assigned as homework" (*WU* March 2, 2004), which caused a greater lack of comprehension. On the reading mid-term, even though I

had a fairly good idea of what was going to be on the test, either because the test turned out to be more difficult than I expected or because my self-confidence was practically gone, I only answered half of the items on the test correctly (*QJM April 2004*). In an essay entitled *Anxious Thoughts*, I described my situation as “trapped in China, imprisoned in a Mandarin classroom 22 hours a week, oppressed by an impossible amount of homework, depressed that the efficient study methods that had served me so well in the past now crumbled before me.”

After a year of studying in Chinese universities, I wrote a personal letter to my boss. I lamented,

In school, I feel distraught. The study habits I've built up in 20 some years of school don't work here. I feel like I'm drowning in language study--and, more than likely, my hatred for the language is developing faster than my facility in it. I resent language study for several reasons. First, my classes are at 8 every morning. This cuts into my prime time for writing and reflection, which means that language study is not only inhibiting progress on my dissertation, it is also encroaching on my time of spiritual reflection. I also resent language because it stifles my professional development. Because of the policy concerning full-time language study and no work, I am not allowed the freedom to do that which I love the most--teaching. At least, I cannot do it openly. Yet, it is in teaching that I feel successful. In language study, I feel like a complete failure. (February 27, 2004).

At times, I felt that I was less than competent in comprehending conversations in Mandarin because my processing time was slow. I find that I often understand more a few minutes later than I did at the time of the exchange. Episode 403051 provides a good

example of this.

On a day in early March, as I was walking through the park on my way home from school, I was involved in a three minute exchange about American politics. My side of the exchange was mostly “*ting bu dong*” (I don’t understand) during the exchange, so the interlocutor would restate his idea, emphasizing salient ideas like “Bush.” I was busy thinking about how I might respond, but didn’t really have much time to respond. Even though I was trying to be cooperative, his words were not making much sense. Some of the message was okay. I recognized the question, “Where are you from?” and could respond to it rather easily at this point. Furthermore, the topic he chose, politics, is not my favorite. Nevertheless, after I had left the conversation, I continued to process what had just happened. About fifty paces away, it dawned on me that the speaker was telling me that he thought George Bush was a good president. It was too late and would have seemed rather strange for me to return and respond to the speaker’s comment. Few people want to wait three minutes for a response in a conversation. To me, it doesn’t seem to matter if someone speaks slow or fast. My problem is always the same: I need time to reflect on what was said. In Mandarin, my processing time is slow.

Feelings of incompetence cause anxiety to rise. I found this to be true in class when I could not respond to the teacher quickly enough. Sometimes, I understood what the teacher had asked and exactly what was required from me in making a response, but had no “productive vocabulary to respond to the teacher’s question” (403041); my inability to respond brought about anxiety.

It is clear from the journals that perceived incompetence creates anxiety (Kitano, 2001). How much perceived incompetence works against language learning (Gregersen & Horowitz, 2002; Vogely, 1999) is not as clear. It is somewhat implied in three episodes of my listening log that occurred within 10 days of each other. In Episode 404012, in the reading class where I felt incompetent most of the time, I struggled to understand the lecture in which the teacher outlined the format for the mid-term exam; my comprehension must have been terrible since I failed the exam. In my listening class, where I felt less incompetent, I struggled to recognize “various details and concept structures in narrative” (404081), but passed the mid-term exam. When I was with my language partner, in a situation where appearing to be competent was not a preoccupation, I could “identify the plot, characters, and theme of a simple story” (403291). Although these episodes cannot provide conclusive evidence that anxiety and perceived incompetence lead to poor listening comprehension, it does demonstrate the importance of providing intercultural listeners with opportunities in which they can be successful.

Challenged Identity and Self-worth

A third source of dysphoria suggested by some of the previous research and strongly evident in my listening log is that of a challenged identity. For me, it was the theme of my third semester. I was embarrassed in the classroom on several occasions. Once, the teacher had called upon me to read, and I did so, but soon discovered I seemed to be reading the wrong paragraph. The teacher pointed to the place I was to read, but I hesitated because I did not recognize the character (40319). On another occasion, “I felt humiliated when asked to do an oral exercise I didn't understand (*WU* March 2, 2004).

I acutely felt the pain of role deprivation. As one who was used to writing the lessons, the loss of control over this aspect of my education was doubly frustrating. In a composition I wrote for my reading class, *Fannaο* (Frustration), I recorded:

如果老师们不能自己控制他们的学习，
Ruguo laoshimen bu neng ziji kongzhi tamen de xuexi,
If teachers cannot self control their study

这是他们的一个大烦恼。

zhe shi tamen de yi ge da fannaο.
this is their one big frustration

[Gloss: It is frustrating for teachers not to be able to control their study situation.]

Part of this frustration was because in returning to the classroom, I lost the status I had obtained as a teacher. A greater part was that as I grew more aware of my incompetence, I lost the excellence I had once held as a student. Though I might have endured the deprivation of role of teacher, given that I had played the double role of teacher and graduate student for many years, the humiliation of losing the role of good student was unbearable.

Shadrach did not struggle with identity issues; neither is his listening log as affectively charged as mine. The affective tenor of his listening seems to mirror that of other teachers who studied another language while teaching abroad. My listening log, on the other hand, particularly the section recorded during my third semester of intensive language study mirrors the experiences of other professionals who have left work to study language (Lindquist, 1995). The implications of this is that ESL teachers in intensive courses who want to foster a low stress environment for their students may want to consider ways of recognizing and appreciating the roles that their students have

attained.

Lack of Motivation

A third challenge, perhaps a response to dysphoria, is a lack of motivation. Shadrach's listening log only shows one instance of this. His work was interrupted by a compulsory lecture by the fire chief. He wrote "I was simply waiting for the fire drill to end so that I could get back to my work. I employed no strategies and this resulted in little comprehension" (November 10).

My listening log also records a specific instance in which I was lacking in motivation. In my newspaper reading class I noted that my "understanding of the topic is not too thorough" and that I had "no interest" in the article we were reading anyway. Concerning my response to this situation, I wrote that I "tried listening, but found it quite challenging" (308042). I dropped the class.

Motivation can have a profound effect on listening comprehension. Most studies on motivation have focused on larger issues: such as the learner's attitude toward the host culture (Csizer & Dornyei, 2005; Donitsa-Schmidt et al., 2004; Dornyei, 2003) or their desire to communicate (Jones, 1994; Yashima, 2002). Nevertheless, these two instances are very much in line with their findings. Just as poor attitudes toward the culture and withdrawal from communication have an adverse effect on classroom and social performance, a lack of motivation has an adverse effect on listening comprehension.

Affective Strategies

Table 4.7 compares the strategies that were used to diffuse dysphoria. Encouraging oneself, or self-talk, was a strategy mentioned in Hsiao and Oxford (2002)

and seemingly something that I adopted, but Shadrach makes no mention of. Refocusing and relaxing were strategies that dominated Shadrach’s listening log, receiving more than ten mentions, probably the most valuable strategy for any intercultural listener. Shadrach did not mention managing input so often, but it is a creative strategy that deserves mention; it could be a subset of taking control and is definitely more specific than the strategy implied by Egbert’s (2003) flow theory.

Table 4.7 Affective Strategies

	Literature Review	Shadrach	Jonnie
Encourage oneself	★		✓
Relax, refocus		★	✓
Take control/ Manage input	?	✓	✓

Key: ★ prominently mentioned ✓ mentioned ?implied

Encourage oneself

Encouraging oneself, or self-talk (Hsaio & Oxford, 2002) is a strategy that seems to be most used by those under pressure. During the semester in which I experienced the most incompetence, depreciation of self worth, and fatigue, I grasped at anything that would reverse the process. I celebrated small victories, like this one that I reported to all my friends: “Several days ago, I understood almost all of a simple story that my doctor/language partner taught me” (*QJM* April 2004). During other semesters, I did not report using this strategy at all. Shadrach did not report it at all.

It seems that affective strategies seem to have a time and a place in which they are most effective. When I was struggling with my incompetence in language class, I needed to encourage myself and to remind myself that I was not as incompetent as I felt. Usually, my self-esteem and self-confidence are quite high. When they returned to these levels, I

did not have to remind myself of how competent I was. The absence of this strategy in Shadrach's listening logs is no surprise. He, too, is generally a self-assured, competent person. Implications of a study by Rossiter (2003) also confirm the usefulness of affective strategies in a particular place and time. She gave an ESL class extensive training in affective strategies and compared their attitudes and performance with another class who did not receive such training. She was surprised that the training had little effect. She did, however, observe that in both classes, teachers "strove to develop a sense of community, to establish a relaxed environment, and to encourage learners to achieve their linguistic goals" (p. 12). It seems that the students had little reason for positive self-talk.

Relax and Refocus

Of all the strategies for managing dysphoria, this one is the most versatile and the most useful. It is also probably the most effective strategy in that relaxing frees up the processes that anxiety shuts down so that the intercultural listener can concentrate more effectively. Shadrach explains it this way:

Pressure in listening situations can impede the message. It's funny, I used to think it was only related to speed of delivery and difficulty of the content, but I think there is another factor (for me anyway) that is like a pressure multiplied when the first two factors hit, it's like my brain starts to go on instantaneous overload mode with buzzers ringing and red lights flashing. I must recognize the problem and convince myself metacognitively that comprehension can only improve if I can refocus and relax. If I am able to do these, it is certainly no guarantee that my comprehension will be better (if the content is too difficult, for example), but

there is also the chance that I can gain comprehension, and sometimes, I realize that I can comprehend much more than I first thought. (April 21)

Shadrach recognized the problem and convinced himself to relax and refocus 10 times. It was a popular strategy that he used at meetings and in interactions in the office (November 2, December 5, February 25) as well as when doing business (May 5). However, it was not limited to transactions. Shadrach also used it in the classroom (January 22) and in seminars (December 6).

Relaxing, particularly resting, allows for better concentration. Having the time to unwind before class improved Shadrach's ability to concentrate during an evening class; the afternoon class had been quite disastrous (November 4). A second visit to the acupuncturist found the doctor more comprehensible. Shadrach records, "I was much sharper on this occasion. I had a good night of sleep and was quite alert. I think this paid off in understanding" (February 21).

I, too, found that refocusing was an important strategy for improving comprehension. Although I do not record this strategy as often as Shadrach, I did employ on two occasions. After being falsely accused of coming to class unprepared although I had spent two or three hours on the assignment the night before, I 'controlled the mounting anxiety' in this way:

The next morning, while I was sitting in the Mandarin prison, shackled to the books, wondering how I could ever keep up in all the classes, the verse came back like a mantra: "by prayer and petition" (Philippians 4:6)...If I feel so oppressed by language anxiety, listening anxiety, cultural anxiety, and all the other anxious thoughts that have tormented me, I must have forgotten to petition God to send

Peace to guard my heart and mind (*Journal* April 12, 2004).

I also record using this strategy of relaxing and refocusing in response to “discomfort discussing grammar in Chinese” (409211).

I do not know why this particular strategy does not have as prominent a place in the literature as it does in Shadrach’s journals. It should. The only place it is even implied is Rossiter’s (2003) study and she found that the ESL students in the study did not use it. Perhaps it was because these students were in a classroom in which teachers kept anxiety levels to a minimum. From Shadrach’s listening log, it appears that the classroom is not the only place that the strategy is useful. Shadrach also used it in transaction.

Take Control/ Manage Input

Taking control of the learning situation translates into allowing intercultural listeners to have a say in what they learn and in the evaluation of how well they have learned. I did not have the luxury of doing so. I struggled with my lack of control from the first day of language study. Perhaps, if I had accepted teaching methods, my education in China might have been a little smoother, but I wanted to change the system that did not encourage creativity, independence, or cooperation. I was doomed.

One might think that controlling the content of what one hears is equally challenging, perhaps impossible for the intercultural listener. Shadrach demonstrates two ways that intercultural listeners can manage input. One way Shadrach employed to insure that the input would remain at a level he could handle was to ask the questions. About a transaction of buying a train ticket, he wrote, “I asked the questions and the worker responded in ways that I could understand” (November 13). He explains the benefits of this strategy in this way:

Being the initiating force in a conversation allowed me to keep everything within my grasp. No deviations occurred so everything followed my expectations. I asked questions and he gave answers. I knew what I was asking and so could predict ...how he might respond to my queries. (November 13).

Another way Shadrach managed the input was to “provide the information that is required before the interlocutor asks for it [and uses] vocabulary that you might not be accustomed to hearing” (March 27). He calls this *preemptive strike*.

My discussions with Shadrach inspired me to think of ways that I managed the input. Two episodes that were cited demonstrate the lack of scripted sequences for asking to speak to guests in Chinese hotels demonstrate two ways I tried to manage input. One method was to appeal to the sympathies of the speaker and firmly establish my status as non-native speaker. I used this when I was absolutely desperate. After several failed attempts to reach my friends in a nearby hotel on the phone, I began the fourth conversation in English. This, I hoped, would help the clerk frame her questions differently and deal with me more patiently. I also imagined she would be relieved when I switched to Mandarin to complete the conversation. She was more patient and I was finally connected to my friends’ room (402121).

Another way that I managed the input was to ask for information in smaller chunks. This strategy I used in one of episodes I used to describe transaction. I had called a hotel asking to be connected to my friends’ room. She rattled off a number that was much longer than a room number. This was not the scripted sequence of the previous hotel, and I just barely understood that she was giving me a phone number. I had no pen or paper with me, but I asked her to repeat the number and repeated it back to her to

check that I had memorized it correctly (410041).

Whereas most of the episodes in which managing the input were used for transactions, this was not the only type of interaction in which the strategy was used. I also used the strategy of asking for information in smaller segments in the classroom. In one instance, I asked the teacher to summarize the content of an article that I had just read but found to be a little beyond my comprehension level (408191).

Evaluation of Affective Strategies

The most important element of intercultural listening is not about one's ability to efficiently prepare, effectively use context and decode words, to accurately anticipate, nor is it about having great powers of observation, fathomless depths of understanding, or strong connections with the host culture. Though all these things are good, effective, efficient, accurate intercultural listening comprehension resides in a great, fathomless, strong concentration. In this episode, previously cited to illustrate instruction and the strategy of translation, Shadrach made this observation concerning his listening abilities in English compared to those of Japanese:

It is interesting to me that I can listen with one ear while thinking about something else when the language being used is English. For example, I can simultaneously be reading the English newspaper, watching a little TV and listening to my wife speak to me. Granted, my comprehension may not be great, but I can manage it. I cannot do the same thing in Japanese. At today's seminar, I was thinking about asking a question in Japanese. I realized that as I tried to formulate the question (so that it sounded like an actual Japanese question rather than some mindless babbling by a half-wit), I had to completely shut out the

incoming stream of Japanese. I guess this problem improves as one becomes more proficient in a language, but at the moment it seems as if it is impossible to imagine the ability to sort of split my attention the way I can in English

(December 6)

I, too, cannot concentrate on listening to more than one thing in Mandarin, as is evident in this excerpt in which my concentration was split between fiddling with my cell phone and paying attention to the lesson: “This morning, during class (and I was caught not paying attention), I figured out how to change the language on my phone to English! Our class carried on its usual banter” (*DA* May 8, 2003).

The introspections from Shadrach’s and my journals tend to indicate that the tension of cognitive difficulty, and to a lesser degree, social dissonance, threatens to distract us and make us focus our attention, not on the content of the discourse, but on personal struggles. When comprehension requires so much concentration, it is quite easy either to drift to other things we need to do, things we would rather be doing, and things that do not require so much concentration or to pity ourselves because of our difficulty, humiliation, fatigue, and incompetence in the arduous challenges we face. This threatens our ability to listen carefully or intently; it threatens our ability to attend and robs us of the euphoria of realizing that we understood the main points and supporting details of an extended discourse. Conversely, when we learn to relax and refocus, and do all that is in our power—encouraging ourselves, practicing, asking for help, sleeping right, or praying—we diffuse the dysphoria and empower ourselves to face the difficulty and dissonance in positive ways.

Sources of Dissonance

For intercultural listeners, because they live in the host culture, learning the language is a matter of survival. They encounter situations on a daily basis that those who learn the language in their home culture very rarely contemplate: the rules, perspectives, and values of the host culture. Figuring out how the rules worked and learning to view the world from the host's perspective is quite challenging, but necessary for intercultural listeners who want to understand what their hosts are really saying.

There is only one episode in which the challenges that arise from learning cultural rules and priorities are clearly seen. Shadrach wrote of a transaction he made in a Japanese garage and of the effect that applying American rules to a Japanese situation had on his comprehension:

I was happy about how much of the conversation I understood, but I think the more interesting discussion relates to the end when I didn't understand. I assumed that the conversation was ending, but in fact not all of the transactions had been completed. I used my US cultural framework of *what takes place at the automobile shop* and applied it to a Japanese setting probably because for the most part everything looked the same. There was a guy in dungarees, there was a work order, there were some parts written down on the work order, I had to approve the ordering of the parts. These all seem perfectly normal and usual and in accordance with the US setting, but in the US, we generally pay for everything following completion of the work. It never even crossed my mind that I might need to pay in advance, so I wasn't ready for it. (March 4)

Applying home rules instead of host rules was almost disastrous on Shadrach's

comprehension.

Both of us tell of the strategies we used to facilitate our cultural adjustment: valuing the host’s perspective and increasing social contact. Sources of examples and discussion about these strategies are shown in Table 4.8. Kim (2001), Gudykunst and Kim (2003) and Ward, Bochner & Furnham (2001) discuss the importance of valuing the host’s perspective and Olson (1977) provides incidental evidence for its effectiveness in acculturation, but literature regarding its influence on listening comprehension is scarce. Shadrach’s listening log implies the use of this strategy by its reflection of Shadrach’s sensitivity to how Japanese view politeness and relevance in intercultural communication. The strategy of increasing social contact, which is mentioned by Kim (2003) and investigated concerning its relationship to acculturation in Lybeck’s (2002) study also figures prominently into my listening logs and other journals.

Table 4.8 Socio-Cultural Strategies

	Literature Review	Shadrach	Jonnie
Value host’s perspective	✓	✓	
Be polite		★	
Be relevant		✓	
Increase social contact	★	?	★

Key: ★ prominently mentioned ✓ mentioned ?implied

Value Host's Perspective

Being able to listen to a message from the host’s perspective could facilitate creating a representation of the host’s message that accurately reflects what the host meant to say. Unfortunately, evidence concerning the influence of this strategy on listening comprehension is as sparse as evidence that it is applied in cross-cultural

communication. Although I recorded the use of the strategy in my journals, posing the question to my teachers and language partners, “If you were in my shoes, what would you do?” I generally asked advice concerning larger issues of cultural acquisition. I have no conclusions regarding how the use of this strategy affected my listening comprehension. Shadrach, however, has narrowed the field, focusing on how issues of politeness and relevance influence his interaction in Japanese.

Be polite. Shadrach struggles to understand and apply the Japanese value of politeness. In one exchange, he says:

When I am alone in a Japanese situation, I am often wondering if what I say will be polite or impolite. Actually, I just asked [my wife] about this situation and she said that what I said was perfectly fine, so I guess I was okay, but I am sometimes hesitant based upon my limited abilities to use the correct forms. The default is the polite form--that's what everyone says, but this is a lie. If someone uses the polite form in an intimate setting, it sounds quite snotty and cold, so it is imperative to become comfortable with both. (personal communication)

In the episode of November 13, which was previously cited concerning the use of using context cues, Shadrach demonstrates his sensitivity even though he was not able to carry out what might have been the most polite action. Someone had instructed him to go somewhere and do something that he could not understand. Because he did not understand, Shadrach did as he had done on a previous occasion, which was in the opposite direction of where the man had pointed. Shadrach's sensitivity to the host's perspective is demonstrated in his reflection, “I was a little concerned that the fellow I had ‘ignored’ might think I was disrespecting his advice” (November 13).

Shadrach seeks to make himself familiar with the polite forms by listening to others, even relying on what he believes his interlocutor's sense of courtesy to be in order to keep the conversation at a level he can understand:

It seems that even very fluent non-native speakers are not as observant as Shadrach is to the underlying rules of politeness. In listening to an interview between his Japanese colleagues and a non-native speaker who had attained the highest level of proficiency on a standardized Japanese test, Shadrach observed that the candidate's answers did not seem to be polite. This observation was confirmed by his colleagues:

The biggest complaint by the faculty members about this candidate was his responses to the Japanese questions. They cited that the candidate's answers were not clear and at times slightly impolite. They also mentioned an inability by the candidate to address the questions sufficiently (December 5).

Not only is Shadrach observant about rules of politeness, he is also sensitive about when to apply them. He did not fear the embarrassment of making a mistake, "I don't mind using [yet to be mastered complex grammatical] structures at 7-11," (March 9), but of causing his colleagues to lose face:

Even when I did understand what was being said, I could never bring myself to even interject because I am uncertain about the formality that should be used. I am also quite concerned about my colleagues; I wouldn't want to say something that was perceived as being rude or inappropriate by the president, which would then reflect on my colleagues as well. It would make me feel awful to have their "face" damaged due my inappropriate comment. (January 20)

His sensitivity to politeness keeps the lines of communication open.

Shadrach's preoccupation with politeness could also be a part of the Japanese cultural script regarding communication. According to Fukushima (forthcoming), the Japanese themselves are preoccupied with *keiko*, the polite way of speaking to others. The prominence of Shadrach's reference to politeness indicates that he is in the process of acquiring or has acquired a Japanese cultural value.

I, too, sought the Chinese perspective of politeness, but not as frequently. In Episode 405053, I had received some explicit instruction on the subject, but it did not really elucidate the situation:

My Mandarin teachers thought that courtesy was an important topic to discuss in class. In one class, the teacher told us that an invitation may be extended just out of courtesy, with the expectation that the person invited will not accept it. To complicate matters, there are other times—and maybe just as frequent, that a Chinese host will extend an invitation in hopes that the listener will accept it. Thus, when an invitation was given to me from a fellow train passenger, I wasn't quite sure what to do. The lady had been quite friendly, trying to engage me in conversation. About an hour before her stop, she invited me to come to her town and visit her. Not really knowing what the culturally appropriate response to an invitation should be, I smiled and made excuses about being busy, but exchanged phone numbers in case she found the time to visit. Later, I discovered that it was a genuine invitation, or at least I assumed it was when the lady called me and extended the invitation two more times (405053).

By knowing the rules regarding politeness, and being empowered to behave in a way that my teacher might have behaved, I was able to anticipate the content of my train

companion's call.

Be relevant. Another way in which Shadrach shows sensitivity to the host's perspective is through considering what the Japanese –not Shadrach—consider relevant in conversation. This is reflected in this musing:

I wonder if [Grice] considered the kind of inaccuracies that cause miscommunication by conversationalists that derive from drastic differences in language fluency. Certainly a proposition might seem to be polite, but if a learner is struggling to produce a proposition which carries quite a different meaning obviously relevancy is lost... because each person could be contributing what he/she deems to be relevant when, in fact, the contributions made by the NNS is actually inaccurate and only perceived as being relevant by both parties.

(November 12)

Increase Social Contact

A second strategy for dealing with the dissonance of acculturation is to increase social contact. Increasing social contact can familiarize the intercultural listener with the subtle rules that govern behaviors and roles in the host culture. The extra exposure gives the intercultural listener practice in listening to the language and a means of gaining a deeper understanding of the culture.

I carried out this strategy from the beginning to the end of my sojourn in China. Within the first month, I reported:

Consider the network of friends I've made in just a short time. A friend in Singapore gave me the phone number of a friend, D, here in Kunming. D

introduced me to her coworker, S, who took me to an English-speaking worship service this morning, which meets (at least for the next two weeks) on the fourth floor of one of the churches. Today after church, we ran into S's best friend, R, who has offered to introduce me to the pastors of her church. (DA March 9, 2003)

D and R became excellent language partners, augmenting the instruction that I was getting at school. Our discussions, though primarily in English, created an ongoing dialog of cultures. I learned from them where and how to eat, where to shop, how to speak, how to play, and how to approach and solve problems. During my first three months in Kunming, I mention eating and playing with D five times:

D had also invited a friend over later that afternoon. She tutored me, I tutored her, then, when the friend came over, we played cards. After playing cards, we went out to eat (she's trying to acclimate me to spicy food). It was 9:30 when I got home last night. (March 15, 2003)

After our tutoring sessions, we either ate together at D's house or went out to eat. On a special occasion, D invited me to her in-laws house, where I learned to make Chinese dumplings and play mahjong. "My hosts were very friendly," I wrote my friends in the States. "Several times at various times during the visit, they invited me to come back sometime to eat dumplings again" (May 4, 2003).

R taught me how to shop:

Friday afternoon, I met my Chinese friend who likes bargaining to go buy a cell phone. She told me to act disinterested and not to smile. I looked at the phones, then read my book...she went first to one booth, took notes on how much all the new cell phones cost, then asked about second hand phones. Then we moved to

another booth, where she went through the same routine, comparing the prices to previous phones. She found one I liked and bargained down to 800 yuan, then left the booth to go to another cell phone market across the street. They didn't have the model we were looking for, neither were the salesmen all that friendly. We went back to the previous cell phone market, to the booth next to the one where she had bargained down to 800 yuan. The salesperson at that booth offered a secondhand phone, in good condition, for 750. She paid for the phone, but continued to look at new models of phones and talk about them (May 3).

I benefited in many ways from my sessions with D and R. D was good at framing speech in a way that I could understand as she taught me from the writing book (March 22). Both D and R helped me edit my early attempts at writing in Mandarin (April 10) and checked my homework (April 17). R noted that it was helpful for her to help me with my homework: Checking over it and explaining where I've used Chinese words and English grammar... helped her see where the problems in her English are; that is, where she tends to plug in English words and use Chinese grammar. The greatest benefit that I derived was in our exchanges about issues than were deeper than eating, playing, shopping, and homework. Both women revealed their hearts and allowed me to see the things that deeply concerned them and deeply moved them. This was especially true of R, who would call at 8:30 to invite me to her house, where I inevitably spent the night because by 2, when our conversation was spent, the gates were all locked. On one occasion:

My tutoring session last night stretched until lunch this afternoon. R couldn't get on my campus, but she could get me on her campus, so we met at her apartment

last night. As usual, we talked after the tutoring. At 10:45, she looked at her watch and said, "OOh" thinking it was almost 12 and time for me to go. Soon we were on another topic. At 11:45, she walked me to my gate and discovered it was locked. I spent the night at her house. This morning, over a breakfast of hot milk and steamed bread, we picked up the conversation where we left off, had some deep discussions of other topics (in English). Before we knew it, it was lunch time. (DA May 1, 2003)

By the time I moved to Nanjing, I knew the value of language partners. Because our agreement was reciprocal--we practiced Mandarin for an hour then English for an hour (or two or three or more)—I was able to recover some sense of competence in my role as teacher. When teaching English, I was recognized as knowledgeable in something, not totally moronic, as I felt during my Mandarin classes. With my language partners, I did not feel humiliated, even when I made mistakes. This boosted my spirit and gave me a reprieve from the loss of status in becoming a student, and proving to be such a poor one at that.

Three years later, I noted how social contact facilitated my comprehension of a sermon:

What helped me understand [the pastor's] sermon? I think it is tremendously helpful that I have a relationship with [her]. I am familiar with the way that she speaks. I think, too, that it was helpful that she uses stories. Stories are much easier to understand than theological arguments. The first story was easy to understand because it was on a topic that I talk about every day: school. I know about passing and failure and the stress of not being able to perform very well. I

know about the need to relax. I also agree that Jesus is the best teacher that anyone could ever have. For the last story, I could visualize the conversation between [the pastor] and [her daughter]. In fact, I know exactly where it was that [the daughter] kissed her mother on the cheek and exactly where in their small apartment that the two of them had the conversation. I also know how smart [the little girl] is and how much she struggles with obeying her parents. (603011)

Shadrach's journal implies that he, too, uses this strategy of increasing social contact. There is evidence in his listening log that in addition to interacting in Japanese with colleagues at his office, he also participates in tennis tournaments, school outings, and dinner parties. He converses with restaurant owners, waitresses and waiters, acupuncturists, door to door salesmen. His journal contains a warning though, concerning the influence of a specific group of native speakers that do not foster positive, successful experiences in intercultural listening: native speakers who cannot make themselves comprehensible for non-native speakers. As Shadrach notes, "Not all speakers of a language are created equal, especially in the eyes of the language learner." Sometimes, language is incomprehensible "because of pronunciation or intonation, or maybe both" (November 17). On another occasion, it was perhaps an "unfamiliar register" that made another dinner guest incomprehensible. Shadrach asked him to repeat the question, which the Japanese man did, but he was not able to couch it in terms that Shadrach could understand. Shadrach hypothesizes, "I get the feeling that such people are not only unaccustomed to speaking to NNS, but they are also not very good language learners themselves. It seems as if they don't have any strategies if their attempt fails (March 3)." In both of these instances, Shadrach understood the same utterance when it was delivered

in Japanese by another speaker.

Perhaps due to the subtle nature of the socio-cultural domain or maybe the design of the listening log, it is difficult to ascertain exactly how well engaging in the strategies of valuing the host's perspective and increasing social contact improved listening comprehension. The evidence of the positive effect of these strategies on comprehension is almost as subtle as the influence of cultural rules, values, and priorities on communication. Intuitively, we know that constant, consistent exposure and practice promotes growth in proficiency. The nature of my social contact, which began with D, R, and S who were fully bilingual in Mandarin and English and culminated with a group of friends who depended on my Mandarin for our daily communication needs, implies that my proficiency in the language had at least attained a level in which native speakers were comfortable with my communication style. Shadrach's sensitivity to politeness, to relevance, even to his explanation of why native speakers who have little contact with non-native speakers cannot make themselves comprehensible, shows that he is constantly updating his scripts to more closely reflect the Japanese world-view. The more accurate the intercultural listeners scripts are in reflecting the view of the host culture, the more proficient the intercultural listener can be in creating a representation of what his host has said that more closely matches the representation that the host intended.

Conclusion

The intercultural listeners' role, the purpose of interaction, the challenges of the cognitive, affective, and socio-cultural environment, and the strategies they use to meet these challenges affects exactly what they understand. The roles affect how much energy they can devote to paying attention. The purpose of interaction seems to affect processing

of information, promoting various levels of interaction between top-down and bottom-up processes of comprehension. The challenges and the strategies the listeners use in response to those challenges further shape their interpretation of what they have heard.

Effect of Roles on Comprehension

Intercultural listeners' role in listening affects the amount of energy that they may devote to attending to comprehension of the discourse. In active roles, the demands of formulating a verbal response compete with their concentration on the message. This does not mean that less proficient intercultural listeners cannot handle active roles. The situations that Shadrach and I regarded as important enough to record in our listening logs were most often those in which we played an active role, usually that of addressee. Thus, we clearly need to listen in active roles. The episodes that required the least demanding responses were those with tightly scripted sequences, questions that we had heard so often that we could process them rather quickly.

In passive roles, although the demands of responding were removed, Shadrach and I had other distractions. It was easy to lose focus on the discourse, particularly when it was well above our comprehension level, long, or uninteresting. In passive roles, we needed to monitor our attention, refocusing when we had fixated on something we had understood or something we had not understood. Thus, to be effective listeners in passive roles, we need to monitor our attention, making sure that we maintain a focus on the content of the discourse.

Effect of Purpose on Comprehension

Whereas the roles of the intercultural listener, particularly that of the active

listener, affect the amount of energy the listener needed to process the message, the purpose of the interaction seems to affect the type of processing. In instructional episodes, Shadrach and I tended to be more concerned about words that we did not recognize, indicating a very strong dependence on the bottom-up processes. In social interaction, we were more concerned with identifying the topic so that we could access an appropriate script or schema to frame our interpretation of the discourse. This indicates a relatively heavy emphasis on top-down processes. In some transactions, the tightly scripted sequences and very familiar routines provided easy access to the appropriate scripts and schema to frame the discourse. Familiarity with the situation and with the words and concepts associated with the situation facilitated decoding. The facility of accessing appropriate scripts and decoding fostered the interaction of top-down and bottom up processes.

The engagement of top-down, bottom-up and interactive processes of comprehension made a difference in exactly what the intercultural listener understood. In transactions, where the processes were interactive, we understood the details of the transaction and we adjusted our scripts to accommodate unexpected moves by the speaker. In social interaction, where the processing was top down, we gained a general feel for the topic of the conversation and the gist of the speaker's perspective on that topic. In instruction, when lessons or sermons were beyond my comprehensibility, I might come away understanding a few words and their denotation, but still had no idea of how they related to the overall discourse. In classes at the right level of comprehensibility, Shadrach and I understood the meaning of the word as well as the way it fit within a particular script.

Common Challenges for Intercultural Listeners

In interpreting discourse, not only do the intercultural listeners need to identify words and their meaning, but they also need to know what the words mean when put together and what significance the utterance has within the social context in which it is uttered. Intercultural listeners' interpretation of the discourse is shaped by their cognitive processes and proficiency, their affective responses to discourse and culture, and their knowledge and experience within the socio-cultural context. Cognitively, the content and task may cause difficulty for the listener. Affectively, a debilitating anxiety or dysphoria may prohibit the intercultural listener from adequately processing the discourse. Socio-culturally, as the intercultural listeners' knowledge and experience in the culture increases, it enables them to more accurately understand exactly what their hosts mean.

The cognitive challenges that Shadrach and I encountered included recognizing words, grasping meaning, and drawing from a very shallow reservoir of previous experience. Shadrach also noted that a lack of knowledge about Japanese grammar hindered his comprehension. Although my struggle with word recognition declined as I lived in China and spoke the language, I still encountered situations in which an inability to recognize a word hampered my comprehension. Shadrach, too, got hung up on certain words at times; when he did, his comprehension suffered. On occasions, Shadrach and I were relatively certain that we understood every word in an utterance, but, like Amelia Bedelia, we could not appropriately grasp the speaker's intended meaning. Our ability to recognize words and grasp meaning increased over time along with our experience in the host culture. It seemed that the more experiences we had to draw on, the more our resources for comprehension also grew. For Shadrach, increased experiences in hearing

grammatical constructions assisted him in interpreting them in subsequent listening episodes.

Negative emotions hamper the process of comprehension. The greatest challenge to the process of listening was fatigue. In two situations, one instruction and one transaction, we observe how fatigue hampered Shadrach's comprehension. In an afternoon class and in an appointment with the acupuncturist following a hard day's work, Shadrach recounted that he failed abysmally in comprehending what the teacher and doctor said to him. In an evening class on the same day and in an appointment a week later, when Shadrach felt rested and alert, he had few difficulties understanding what was told to him. Shadrach and I were also challenged on occasion by a lack of motivation. When we lacked motivation and interest, we formed a very sketchy representation of the message, less than a shadow of what the speaker intended. As seen in my journals, I also struggled with identity issues and self-worth and perceived incompetence during the second year of language study; these primarily due to not being as successful as a student as I had in the past as well as missing my responsibilities as a teacher. Even though I seemed to comprehend the spoken message in spite of these negative emotions, the constant tension surely slowed my progress.

In the process of acculturation, particularly in adjusting to the rules, the values, and the priorities of the host culture, the intercultural listener occasionally feels off-balance. The effect of the dissonance on comprehension is rarely observed in this study. It was mostly clearly seen in Shadrach's episode at the garage, as he applied his own cultural framework of what goes on in an American garage to the mechanic's discourse at a Japanese garage, and did not respond in a way that the Japanese mechanic recognized

as appropriate. Intercultural listeners' personal worldviews can easily distort their understanding of their host's message.

Most Frequently Employed Strategies

To deal with the difficulty, dysphoria, and dissonance of intercultural listening, Shadrach and I employed quite a few strategies: building vocabulary, guessing word meanings from context, getting a translation of the word, identifying keywords and the topic, listening for the gist, managing input, predicting, relaxing and refocusing, valuing the host's perspective, and increasing social contact, and to a small degree, encouraging ourselves. Some of these proved directly useful to our comprehension and others might have helped out more in the long run. Still others were rather intuitive, employed because we thought they might foster better comprehension, but their true nature cannot be determined.

Building vocabulary is an intuitive strategy. On several occasions, Shadrach wrote of needing to increase his understanding of words. I wrote of one strategy of building comprehension, studying words in preparation for a transaction. Indeed, I could identify some of these words from the stream of speech, but sometimes the words I had learned were woefully inadequate in discerning what the host meant in her response to my query. This inadequacy was not due to an ineffective strategy, but ineffective strategy use. Clearly, I needed some guidance in building vocabulary.

Guessing from context is another strategy for which the use rather than the strategy is often more the culprit of miscomprehension or non-comprehension. It is one that Shadrach and I used with great regularity irrespective of its usefulness. For me, it was most helpful for comprehension after I had attained a base level of proficiency in the

language. For Shadrach and me both, it proved the most effective when the meaning of the word that we had guessed was confirmed either in the dictionary or in hearing the word in another situation.

Translation, also, is a strategy that is most conducive to learning when used as a tool to confirm one's comprehension. Shadrach often relied on translation when he was in a pinch. In many transactions, his wife or a colleague was a ready interpreter. In some social interaction, he could also depend on his wife, or on someone else at the table to interpret for him. In instruction, he could refer to an English text. He also carried the dictionary. Interpreters were not always available for me, but I did have a dictionary on hand. In these cases, even though it is much easier just to stand aside and let the interpreter do all the work of putting the message into a language that is more comprehensive, in the long run, it was better for both Shadrach's and my language development if we wrestled with the host language first and used translation, either in the form of an interpreter or dictionary, to confirm our comprehension rather than shape it.

When the intercultural listener correctly identifies the topic of conversation so that he can access an appropriate script or identifies keywords and places them into the proper script, comprehension is greatly aided. Shadrach's use of keywords helped him discern where a meeting would be held and the topic of questions and responses in an interview. In using keywords, I was able to understand what type of information a friend's mother who could not speak English needed to extract from her daughter's neighbors.

Listening for the gist is not often employed. Shadrach mentions it in passing, but not in regard to his communication in Japanese. When he uses it in English, he uses it to

catch up on information that he missed. Thus, it may be a more useful strategy for advanced language learners.

The strategy of prediction is one that needs to be clearly defined and differentiated in order to observe its effectiveness. Shadrach and I do, on occasion, talk about it in general terms; for Shadrach, this general use is usually an evaluative statement concerning what he should have done. His actual use of the strategy is much more specific. When prediction is applied for effective comprehension, it is in situations where Shadrach and I have multiple experiences. Shadrach can predict the scripted sequences of ordering at a restaurant and checking out of a store. As long as there are no unexpected moves, he is confident that what he understands is what the speaker wants him to understand. When I am familiar with the situation, even if it is not a scripted sequence, I can apply my knowledge of the situation and be confident that I have comprehended the message as the speaker intended for me to.

Encouraging oneself is not a strategy that is needed for confident listeners. Shadrach seldom employs it. I used it only for a period of great dysphoria. It indirectly affected my comprehension in that if I had not employed the strategy, I would have remained distracted and would not have listened to the message. One cannot comprehend a message she does not attend.

The most useful strategy for diffusing both long and short periods of dysphoria, one that is useful for both confident and not so confident intercultural listeners is that of relaxing and refocusing. Letting go of the dysphoria so that one can concentrate on the message frees up the intercultural listeners' energy for comprehension. When Shadrach employed the strategy, concepts that he could not understand just a few hours or a few

minutes before became more comprehensible.

Taking control of the situation and managing the input takes creativity, but, when these are used effectively, the intercultural listener's comprehension is greatly improved. Shadrach was a master in employing this strategy. In transaction, he could ask the questions before his host asked them, thus causing his host to frame the discourse in a way that he could comprehend. The direct effects of this strategy on comprehension are evident; however, promoting a use of them that is as effective as Shadrach's is another challenge altogether.

Valuing the host's perspective is another strategy that has a direct effect on comprehension. The difficulty for intercultural listeners is recognizing when they are interpreting a situation according to their own rules, values, and priorities instead of their hosts'. This is not a strategy that I found in my listening logs. Shadrach's sensitivity to the Japanese culture is quite evident. The improved comprehension that resulted from readjusting his cultural script further demonstrates the effectiveness of this strategy.

Increasing social contact is one of the intuitively useful strategies. One's familiarity with the socio-cultural environment might enhance comprehension. At this point, due to the lack of evidence, or perhaps its subtlety, it is difficult to determine just how extensive the effect of increasing social contact really is. Shadrach's and my use of the strategy is certainly implied, but themes regarding its effectiveness for comprehension are subtle and not forthcoming.

The intercultural listeners in America's ESL classrooms quite likely encounter the same issues that Shadrach and I encountered: recognizing words as they are spoken in discourse, grasping the meaning of utterances, fatigue, perceived incompetence in

listening to the host language, role deprivation, lack of motivation for listening to some types of discourse, incomprehensible native speakers, and people with a foreign perspective regarding politeness. In our listening logs, Shadrach and I have identified some of the strategies we have used to deal with these challenges in the cognitive, affective, and socio-cultural domains. Some may be useful for an individual or in a specific situation; others could be useful anywhere at anytime by anyone. All have implications for the ESL classrooms. In Chapter 5, we will investigate the implications of recognizing the challenges that intercultural listeners face and how the strategies that Shadrach and I employed may be incorporated into ESL Listening curricula.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

What can be gleaned from these adventures of intercultural listening? What do intercultural listeners need from their teachers to become more proficient? How can ESL teachers help ESL listeners like Aki become more competent, confident intercultural listeners? The first part of this chapter will explore the findings of the study, highlighting what teachers should know that will help their students become more effective intercultural listeners. In the second part of this chapter, I will discuss some of the principles implied by these findings and suggest ways to apply them in the ESL classroom. Finally, I will consider the limitations and extensions of this study.

What Teachers Should Know

This study found that the following factors greatly affect intercultural listening behavior and comprehension in direct and indirect ways: the role of the listener, the purpose of the interaction, word recognition, experience, fatigue, and subtle cultural rules. From my experience and from reading of Shadrach's experience, I believe that effective comprehension in intercultural listening is not achieved through totally self-directed instruction nor complete dependence on a teacher, but through a collaborative dance between the two. This study elucidated what Shadrach and I needed in order to become effective intercultural listeners, but ESL teachers must do a little listening and a

little observing of their own to determine exactly what their students need. Hopefully, this study has uncovered some of the needs that intercultural listeners cannot articulate in their host language.

Roles & Purpose

The role of the intercultural listener within the interaction determines the amount of energy that can be devoted to processing the discourse. Schober and Clark (1989) suggested that addressees had better comprehension than over-hearers because the speaker packaged the message primarily for the addressee, responding to the problems that listener indicated concerning the reception of the speaker's message. Over-hearers could not ask the speakers to address the inconsistencies or inadequacies that they as listeners had in receiving the message. Shadrach and I found the situation to be a little different. When, in the active roles of addressee and participant, we had to simultaneously process the speaker's message and our own response, we were not as secure in our understanding as we were in the role of over-hearer. In fact, in the few episodes we recorded as over-hearers, our comprehension was good. Shadrach felt more secure about his listening comprehension when he was observer than when he was addressee.

In the passive listening roles, however, we could be easily distracted. Unless we constantly monitored our attention, it was easy for us to zone out and lose a segment of the discourse. For this reason, it is perhaps better to provide intercultural listeners with a chance to practice more in the active roles. To lessen the demands of a verbal response on those who are beginning a study of the language and the culture, teachers may want to consider activities in which intercultural listeners in active roles give either non-verbal

responses or very short responses in scripted sequences.

The purpose of the interaction seems to determine the ease with which the intercultural listener can integrate bottom-up and top-down processes during comprehension. A number of studies have suggested that more effective comprehension derives from an interaction of top-down and bottom-up processes (Carrell, 1988; Carrell & Eisterhold, 1988; Eskey, 1988; Kelly, 1991; Mendelsohn, 1994; Schnell, 1992; Tsui & Fullilove, 1998). This study seems to support this assertion. However, the episodes in which either Shadrach or I was more likely to engage in such processes were those of transaction. In social interaction, our energy was directed toward top-down processes as we tried to determine which script needed to be activated. In instruction, we, like the language learners in the aforementioned studies, were quite text-bound. Thus, in order to release our students from the demands of being text-bound, it may be of benefit to those who are just learning the language and culture to be immersed in more transaction, using tightly controlled scripts. Usually, text-books suggest role plays. Such activities are very good when the tightly controlled scripts are relevant to the intercultural listener. In my study of Mandarin textbooks, though, I found that most of the scripts were irrelevant to my situation and never used outside the classroom. Some of the scripts that I needed, like how to make requests to speak to someone on the phone and how to pay bills, were never discussed.

Word Recognition

Word recognition is one of the greatest challenges for the intercultural listener. This may be why we are so text-bound. Shadrach and I engaged in multiple strategies to get the meaning of words: guessing what they mean from the context, looking them up in

the dictionary, and asking for a partial or full translation. Nation (2000) suggested that in order to learn a word by guessing its meaning from context, a person needs to understand more than 95% of the other words. I cannot speak for Shadrach, but I am sure that I very seldom encountered a situation in which I knew that many words. This did not keep me from guessing. Shadrach and I guessed many words from context, as did listeners in Vogely's (1995) study and Bacon's (1992) study. It seems, though, that the principle that we can learn from Nation's assertion concerning the proportion of words that one needs to know to effectively guess from context and from the observation that the number of my guesses increased in later episodes is that this is perhaps a strategy most effectively employed by more proficient intercultural listeners.

The other strategies for getting the meaning of a word: asking for an interpretation of the entire utterance, asking for a translation for a specific word, and looking up the word in a bilingual dictionary are mainstays for Shadrach and me. Hsiao and Oxford (2002) imply that other listeners find that translation is an oft employed strategy, but none of the other studies reviewed for this dissertation mentioned it at all. Neither did they mention using the dictionary. Shadrach and I used translators and dictionaries rather frequently. They seemed to be most effective for learning the word when used to confirm our interpretation rather than shape it.

The need for building vocabulary is one that is universally felt by intercultural listeners. This may be why, especially at first, they focus so much on the bottom-up processes of comprehension. What words do intercultural listeners need to know? Textbooks offer multiple suggestions, some of them useful, some of them irrelevant for a particular intercultural listener. Intercultural listeners could probably generate their own

list of vocabulary words, but even though the words might be relevant to them, they may not represent the way that those of the host culture would express what the intercultural listener wants to comprehend. Thus, teachers and intercultural listeners need to collaborate, pinpointing the vocabulary and linguistic structures the listener would encounter when in contact with the host culture.

Experience

Effective comprehension seems to be greatly dependant upon the intercultural listener's experience. Knowledge of the culture, of the topic, of the routines within a given situation are all gained through experience. Many studies have focused on the importance of background knowledge in order to grasp the meaning of an utterance (Anderson & Lynch, 1988; Buck, 2001; Carrell, 1988; Eskey, 1988; Mendelsohn, 1994; Rost, 1990), but in this study, experience dominates comprehension. Shadrach could not understand deviations from scripted sequences because, up until that point, he had not experienced them. When walking in the park, I could not comprehend the pleasantries beyond the greetings and the question, "Where are you from?" because I had no experience in discussing politics in Mandarin. The year before, I asked a girl to repeat the question "Where are you from?" several times because she was not following the textbook script that I had experienced in class.

Experience facilitates strategies for grasping meaning of the utterance. Through experience, intercultural listeners become familiar with the ideas and words associated with a specific topic. Shadrach and I both used keywords in order to identify the topic and access the script needed to interpret the discourse. Listening for the gist may also depend on experience. How can one form a gist without a base of prior experience?

Shadrach and I did not employ this strategy as often. Listeners in the studies by Bacon (1992) and Vogely (1999) seemed to find it useful. Mendelsohn (1994) also considers it important. However, it did not greatly aid Shadrach's or my comprehension.

Prediction, on the other hand, was an extremely important strategy and is heavily dependent on the intercultural listener's experience. It has been highlighted in various studies (Bacon, 1992; Mendelsohn, 1994; Vogely, 1994). This study highlights exactly what types of things are predicted. Prediction is enabled by Shadrach's familiarity with scripted sequences and by my use of context cues. With scripted sequences, familiarity helps to predict exactly what type of word, and sometimes what exact word, the speaker will utter. Intercultural listeners may use context cues together with their background knowledge and previous experience in order to predict the types of ideas that will be presented by the speaker. When listeners are able to narrow the types of words and ideas that they will encounter in the discourse, they can process the discourse more fluently. Thus, ESL teachers can assist their students greatly by providing them with experience in situations that they might encounter, even if it is a simulated experience.

Fatigue and other Affective Factors

Fatigue is one of the greatest challenges to the listening comprehension process. One obscure reference to this was made in the literature review: Rising, 2001. Other studies concerning affective influence on learning were more concerned with motivation (Egbert, 2003; Dornyei, 2003), incompetence (Elkahaifi, 2005; Hsaio & Oxford, 2003; Oxford, 1999; Gregerson & Horowitz, 2002, Vogely, 1999), and self-worth (de Andres, 1999). Shadrach demonstrates how fatigue can hamper his comprehension when on two occasions in two different places his comprehension sagged when he was tired but soared

when he was well rested. In my experience, too, weariness made it difficult to process an already challenging discourse. Thus, the most useful affective strategy is one that provides an antidote to fatigue and distraction: relax and refocus.

Perceived incompetence and a lack of self-efficacy seemed to inhibit comprehension indirectly. According to de Andres (1999) and Oxford (1999), students with confidence fared better in the classroom. Confidence also allows the student to focus on the discourse rather than being concerned about her own poor performance. However, not all students have a sustained sense of incompetence and worthlessness. Shadrach seldom demonstrated that he remotely experienced either one during the six months he participated in the study. After moving from a stressful curriculum to one in which I had more control, all feelings of perceived incompetence waned. Even in the last couple of months in the stressful curriculum, after I relaxed, the incompetence and identity crises began to ebb away, and my attention span lengthened.

Motivation certainly played a part in our comprehension. When unmotivated, we simply did not listen. Egbert (2003) discussed establishing flow in the classroom, a time when the students are so involved in the task that they lose sense of time and self-consciousness. The need for interesting, relevant activities should not be ignored.

Cultural Rules

Effective comprehension seems to be dependent on the intercultural listener's knowledge of the values and priorities of the host culture. Lybeck (2002) suggests that listeners with greater social contact were more effective communicators. Kim (2001) proposes that an understanding of the host cultures values and priorities facilitates language learning and communication. Although this study did not find a great multitude

of evidence supporting these assertions, the one that was found, one in which Shadrach had to adjust his script to accommodate the Japanese way of ordering auto parts, is clear evidence that an intercultural listener's knowledge of cultural scripts has a profound effect on comprehension.

It may have been difficult to find evidence for this because the cultural rules are very subtle. We may not have been cognizant of the other times that we had poor comprehension due to an application of the wrong cultural script. Often, teachers present some of the more salient cultural rules in their languages classes. They should continue to do so. It takes a very astute, proficient intercultural listener to recognize when his comprehension is impaired by cultural issues.

Implications & Applications

Intercultural listening is an affectively charged event, particularly when the intercultural listener also faces the natural tension of cultural adjustment. Stress facilitates and is facilitated by cultural adjustment (Kim, 2003). There is also the danger of stress debilitating and being debilitated by cultural adjustment. DeAndres (1999) demonstrates how encouragement and fostering a safe community within the classroom can thwart that which threatens to debilitate the intercultural listener's adjustment. Rossiter's (2003) study in affective strategies and self-efficacy, although it did not present her desired results of proving the importance of affective strategies, affirms that at least one school in Canada provides an affectively defused environment for ESL students. From the wealth of studies on affect in the ESL classroom (e.g. Arnold & Brown, 1999; Egbert, 2003; Krashen, 1982; Stevick, 1999), I suspect that many more schools and ESL classrooms in the US and Canada strive to keep the debilitating effects of cultural adjustment and

language learning out of their classroom, setting up an environment of mutual respect and encouragement. They would do well to continue this.

Having attended the affective needs of the ESL classroom and thus, having removed some of the debilitating anxiety, ESL teachers naturally want to know what they can do to help students become more effective intercultural listeners. In my experience, it was little things that helped alter what might have become a really bad attitude toward the host language and culture: encouragement, two minutes of individualized attention, and patience. From my experience, both in living and writing these intercultural listening adventures, I would like to highlight two more activities that might be incorporated into ESL curricula in listening: facilitating active listening roles and increasing knowledge, experiences and strategy awareness.

Facilitating Active Listening Roles

Generally, I think that the goal of most ESL curricula is to prepare students for the world outside the classroom. To do so, we should probably set up classroom activities that will reflect the demands and situations of such listening. Since the listening logs most often recorded episodes of transaction in active listening roles, the ESL teacher might want to consider incorporating more of these interactive situations and roles into the curriculum. Intuitively, even out-dated curriculum designers seemed to notice the need for transaction. According to Brown and Yule (1983), it was the predominant type of interaction in textbooks. It still is.

Finding activities to promote active listening roles is a little more challenging, particularly when engaging a classroom full of students. Teachers are well advised to value the moments when they can address each student as an individual and work these

moments into class. Role plays promote active listening roles for those involved in the role play, but those who are outside the role play fall into passive listening roles. Simulations and games (Hill, forthcoming) promote active listening roles, but care should be taken with competitive simulations; they may undermine the atmosphere of encouragement and respect that the ESL teacher has sought to foster, causing distress (Hill & Lance, 2002; Kamimura & Tjie, 2002; Tjie, 2002).

The best place for active listening roles, however, is probably outside the classroom where the intercultural listener is involved in authentic, one-on-one active listening roles. This does not necessarily have to be a formal tutoring situation. Language institutes and ESL teachers could encourage and facilitate relationships between ESL students and people in the community. My best language partners in China were the people that I chose since I chose them on the basis of common interests and mutual friends. However, the language partner who was introduced to me by a teacher was just as helpful.

Language partners serve several valuable functions. Not only do they provide opportunities for performing in active listening roles, they also provide opportunities for students to step in to passive roles, such as the observer, that are more likely to keep the intercultural listener more engaged. Language partners can model the situations that intercultural listeners consider relevant at the time that the intercultural listener needs them. For example, when the intercultural listener needs to mail a letter, he or she can ask a language partner to help at that time rather than waiting three or four weeks for the unit about the post office. The listener could perhaps jot down a few notes of the words or phrases he or she might hear then listen for those words and phrases as the language

partner models the transaction.

Language partners also increase the intercultural listener's social contact with the host culture. If the partnership is a satisfying one (Lybeck, 2003), it could facilitate the intercultural listener's adjustment to the host country. Perceptive intercultural listeners recognize this. They notice when the host community is reaching out, and they take full advantage. Some might need a little encouragement to become involved in these activities, or perhaps the assurance from their teachers that it is all right. The classroom, then, might equip them to respond to these opportunities, providing guidance in phone etiquette and accepting invitations.

Increasing Knowledge, Experience, and Strategy Awareness

Implicit in much of the research in intercultural listening is the notion that an ESL teacher could equip students to become better language learners, better readers, or better intercultural listeners simply by empowering them with strategies. From such studies, researchers have derived a score or more of strategies. This study reduced the list of strategies to those that are salient not only in research but also in Shadrach's and my listening logs. One of the problems inherent in strategy studies is nailing down exactly what a strategy means and making its definition specific enough for replication (Macaro, 2006). Another problem is that it seems that students do not always know how to apply the strategies (Vogely, 1999); even for those who received training, cognitive strategies seem to be an effective tool for only a select group of learners who can accurately assess their comprehension (Halbach, 1999; Rivers, 2001); affective strategies also seem to apply to a select few whose interlocutors are ignorant of the need for attending affect (Rossiter, 2003). Thus, it seems that we might do well to first teach our students to

accurately assess their comprehension, collaborating with them in defining and describing the elements of a typical utterance.

Implicit in the research of strategies is that students use them whether they have been trained, or not (Goh, 2002; Hsaio & Oxford, 2002; Huang, 2005). Also, as we observed in the listening logs, those who know about strategies do not always arrive at adequate comprehension by applying them. Halbach (1999) suggested that intermediate listeners were more capable of using them effectively.

What aided Shadrach's and my comprehension most was not absolute accuracy in guessing from context, identifying keywords, identifying the topic, deriving the gist, predicting, or even our ability to relax and refocus on the discourse. These were helpful, but what aided us most in executing all of these strategies was experience and prior knowledge. Thus, our students would probably grow more as intercultural listeners if we continued to focus on building their experiences and knowledge in a way and at a time that it is most comprehensible to them. This means generating cues—worksheets, graphic organizers, manipulatives, props, gestures, pictures, videos—to augment the spoken message. To build experience and knowledge for intercultural listeners in the initial stages of language acquisition, as suggested by Shadrach's listening log, teachers might familiarize students with scripted sequences. Once the intercultural listener has a greater repertoire of experiences and knowledge to draw from, then might be a good time to collaborate with the intercultural listeners and to explore and evaluate the effectiveness of the strategies they naturally use.

In a way, that sums up the thrust of these *Adventures in Intercultural Listening*: collaborating with another intercultural listener and exploring and evaluating the

strategies that I used in intercultural listening. Scholarly readings helped shaped my thinking about the listening process and strategies that I used to comprehend my hosts; scholarly collaboration and introspection helped me debrief the entire experience. My discussions with Shadrach helped me first to explore the strategies I had already identified and investigate whether I used some that Shadrach identified and then to evaluate the effectiveness of using those strategies. Collaborating with Shadrach also helped me define some of the strategies that other scholars, other intercultural listeners, and I throw around without really thinking about what they mean or what exactly we are doing when we say that we employ them. Although collaboration of this nature can be guided by professionals, those who participate in it do not need certification in linguistics or language pedagogy. Intercultural listeners bring their own experience and expertise to the table; ESL teachers and intercultural listeners alike could learn from that experience.

Limitations and Extensions

As this journey draws to a close, I am not sure that I have really discovered the slow miracle of language acquisition. It is true that I am now more familiar with the challenges of intercultural listening and can, perhaps, help other intercultural listeners steer clear of the rocks and weather the storms of difficulty, dysphoria, and dissonance. I can help them increase their knowledge and experience of scripted sequences and American culture. I am not convinced that this is enough.

What have I gained through navigating these waters of intercultural listening? What have I gained through reading Shadrach's adventures? I realized that with only two listeners in the study it would be limited in the generalizations that would apply to all intercultural listeners, but I had still hoped for something more conclusive. Maybe I was

looking for something that would speed the miracle of intercultural listening comprehension along.

All I have to show for this intercultural listening adventure is, perhaps, a greater sensitivity to the plight of the intercultural listener, a little more patience for the intercultural listener's processing, and more reasonable expectations regarding the process of learning another language and culture. This adventure has left me with more questions that begin with, "Would the results be different if..." If I had asked more specific questions about the socio-cultural domain, would I have been able to observe how cultural rules affect listening? If I had studied part time and taught full time, would I have experienced less anxiety? Would my experiences be more closely related to Shadrach's? If more people had participated in the study, would I have discovered a more diverse group of strategies and different types of challenge? What if I ...

Ah! It seems my only course is to feed my insatiable desire to continue the quest.

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APPENDIX A

Participant Consent Form

Title: Adventures in Foreign Language Listening

Investigator: Jonnie Hill

Email: qiujiangni@yahoo.com

Phone: 86 (898) 6892 6770

The major premise of my study in listening comprehension is that comprehension is more about *what* the listener understands than *how many* words you recognized. Thus, the central question is, “What do you do in order to understand a language that you haven’t quite mastered?”

To answer this question, I have kept a record of my listening experiences and my philosophy of listening for the last three years. Now I appeal to you, my friends and comrades in language learning to join me on a short journey through listening comprehension, lasting four to eight months (November 2005 through July 2006).

There are no known risks associated with this project which are greater than those ordinarily encountered in daily life. Your participation in this project is voluntary; you may withdraw from the project at any time.

Here is what I would ask of you:

1. A listening log

This document records and reflects upon your listening experiences. It follows a very simple template:

Setting & time

What I understood

What I did (clues I used) to arrive at that understanding

What I misunderstood

Why I misunderstood

What I need that would have made me more confident that what I understood was similar to what the speaker was trying to communicate

Your listening log should be submitted once a month with ten to thirty new entries. You may email it to me at jiaje@juno.com; qiujiangni@yahoo.com or send it by mail to Hainan College of Vocation and Technique, Nan Hai Da Dao 95, Haikou, Hainan 570216.

[570216 海南海口南海大道95号海南职业技术学院外办公室 Jonnie Hill]

2. A response journal (optional)

I’ve begun writing a one page synopsis of various issues and topics that I cover in my dissertation and a few questions to accompany it. So far, I’ve written about various metaphors used to describe listening comprehension. I am also planning units on cognitive components of listening (things people do when interpreting the message), cultural components of interpretation, and affective components of interpretation. You may elect to read and respond, to read and not respond, or not to participate in any or all of the weekly half-page articles in listening

comprehension. You may also elect to delay or defer a response to a time that is more convenient, as long as it gets to me before July 2006. This, too, may be submitted by email or mail, then discussed by phone, chatting on the internet, or, when it can be arranged, on-site visits (mine or yours). The method of submission and discussion is up to you. In any case, we could schedule the discussions for a time that is convenient for both of us. Information from entries in your response journal and from our discussions may be used in this research.

Here is what I offer you in return:

1. Confidentiality. When writing up this study either for my dissertation or other publication, your name will be changed. Though I may share certain episodes from your listening log and response journal with other participants in this study, I will not share any details that would embarrass or discredit you personally.
2. Monthly discussion of your listening log. These discussions would encompass my observations about your listening logs and how your experience compares to that of other learners in general. Your listening log will not be discussed with anyone other than you. If you have any other concerns or questions about listening or language learning, these, too, can be discussed.
3. Short summaries of current research about cognitive, affective, and cultural components of foreign language listening comprehension and a forum for discussing these ideas.
4. Excerpts from my listening log and response journals.
5. A personal profile of your listening habits and a recommendation for how to listen effectively, based on the results of this study.

I will keep your listening log and response journal until my dissertation is complete or 2009, whichever comes first. At that time, unless you request their return, I will throw them away or delete them from my computer. The OSU Institutional Review Board (IRB) has the authority to inspect consent records and data files to assure compliance with approved procedures. If you have any questions on your rights as a participant in this research, you may contact Dr. Sue C. Jacobs, IRB Chair, 415 Whitehurst Hall, Stillwater, OK 74078, irb@okstate.edu.

I have read and fully understand the consent form and agree that the materials discussed above may be used for the purpose of investigating foreign language listening comprehension.

Participant's Signature

Date

I have explained this document before asking the participant to sign it.

Jonnie Hill, principal investigator

Date

APPENDIX B

Excerpt from Jonnie's Mandarin Listening Log

Part 1. Information about episode (Inspired by Rost, 1990)

Interactive Goals			Tasks			
Episode Date role	Type of interaction	Goal of interaction	how (if) achieved	Listening Tasks	Main obstacles	First response
509211 2005-9-21 addressee	Social	respond to request	knowledge of speaker, and previous experience	Interpret request	vocab/accent	guess from context
510021 2005-10-2 addressee	transaction	respond to request	Not achieved	Interpret request	emotional noise	Confusion asked for
510241 2005-10-24 addressee	transaction	get a parking pass	Observing contextual clues	Decode instructions	Limited vocabulary	repetition/ clarification
510301 2005-10-30 audience	instructional	Understand main point and details	Contextual clues, knowledge	listen for the gist, apply knowledge	Limited vocabulary	guess from context
511011 2005-11-1 addressee	Social	Respond to offer	Gestures	Identify purpose	Distracted by other work	ask for repetition

Comments

9.21 Effectiveness of using previous knowledge: A month ago, in getting the child to settle down, I taught her two rhymes about monkeys. We had done the monkey jumping on the bed several times. I could tell that she was requesting something, but it wasn't until I keyed in on the word weibu (tail) and remembered that I had previously done the rhyme by swinging the monkey from the tail. Then I recognized her request. Affect: no threats other than a wild child at bedtime (and settling her down wasn't my responsibility).

10.2 Effectiveness of using appropriate expectations and predictions: In this case, the request was a little different than I expected and I recognized every single word in the utterance, I was preoccupied with something else. I was sitting next to the window...

Oklahoma State University Institutional Review Board

Date: Tuesday, November 29, 2005
IRB Application No AS0628
Proposal Title: Adventures in Foreign Language Listening

Reviewed and Processed as: Expedited

Status Recommended by Reviewer(s): Approved Protocol Expires: 11/28/2006

Principal Investigator(s)

Jonnie Lynn Hill
PO Box 2181
Stillwater, OK 74076

Carol Moder
205 Morrill
Stillwater, OK 74078

The IRB application referenced above has been approved. It is the judgment of the reviewers that the rights and welfare of individuals who may be asked to participate in this study will be respected, and that the research will be conducted in a manner consistent with the IRB requirements as outlined in section 45 CFR 46.

The final versions of any printed recruitment, consent and assent documents bearing the IRB approval stamp are attached to this letter. These are the versions that must be used during the study.

As Principal Investigator, it is your responsibility to do the following:

1. Conduct this study exactly as it has been approved. Any modifications to the research protocol must be submitted with the appropriate signatures for IRB approval.
2. Submit a request for continuation if the study extends beyond the approval period of one calendar year. This continuation must receive IRB review and approval before the research can continue.
3. Report any adverse events to the IRB Chair promptly. Adverse events are those which are unanticipated and impact the subjects during the course of this research; and
4. Notify the IRB office in writing when your research project is complete.

Please note that approved protocols are subject to monitoring by the IRB and that the IRB office has the authority to inspect research records associated with this protocol at any time. If you have questions about the IRB procedures or need any assistance from the Board, please contact Beth McTernan in 415 Whitehurst (phone: 405-744-5700, beth.mcternan@okstate.edu).

Sincerely,



Sue C. Jacobs, Chair
Institutional Review Board

VITA

Jonnie Lynn Hill

Candidate for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Thesis: ADVENTURES IN INTERCULTURAL LISTENING

Major Field: English

Biographical:

Education:

1985, June. High School diploma. American Cooperative School; Monrovia, Liberia.

1989, May. Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education. Oklahoma Baptist University; Shawnee, OK.

1992, May. Master of Divinity. Midwestern Seminary; Kansas City, Mo.

2000, December. Master of Arts in English. Oklahoma State University; Stillwater, OK.

2006, December. Completed the requirements for Doctor of Philosophy in English. Oklahoma State University; Stillwater, OK.

Experience:

1993-1996 English facilitator for the Provincial Health department of Indonesia

1997-2000 graduate teaching associate of composition in the English department at Oklahoma State University

2000-2002 assistant director of international composition in the English department at Oklahoma State University

2002-2004 studied Mandarin in China at various universities

2005-2006 taught English at Hainan College of Vocation and Technique in China.

Name: Jonnie Lynn Hill

Date of Degree: December 2006

Institution: Oklahoma State University

Location: Stillwater, Oklahoma

Title of Study: ADVENTURES IN INTERCULTURAL LISTENING

Pages in Study: 200

Candidate for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Major Field: English

Scope and Method of Study: Introspective, exploratory study of how two American English teachers living abroad managed or resolved the cognitive, affective and socio-cultural challenges they encountered when listening to Japanese, Chinese, Acehnese, or Indonesian.

Findings and Conclusions: The intercultural listeners in the study most often recorded listening episodes in which they were addressees in the conversations, occasionally they were in more passive listening roles as well. The purpose of conversation was quite frequently transaction, in which the listener exchanged information with their hosts at work, in stores, in hospitals, and in restaurants. Sometimes, the listener was in an instructional setting; less frequently, the listener was engaged in conversation solely for the purpose of social interaction. Although the listeners differed in many ways regarding the challenges they faced and the strategies they employed, they did have some challenges and strategies in common. Common challenges to their comprehension included word recognition and fatigue. The most useful strategies for facilitating comprehension included using a dictionary, asking for a translation, predicting from scripted sequences and context cues, and relaxing. This study recommends that ESL teachers create a comfortable affective environment, facilitate the use of active listening roles, and increase their students' knowledge, experience, and strategy awareness.

ADVISER'S APPROVAL: Dr. Carol Lynn Moder