Listening (top-down or bottom-up): which one do students prefer?

In this presentation, I will talk about:

- A brief summary of what bottom-up and top-down is;

- The results of the research I conducted;

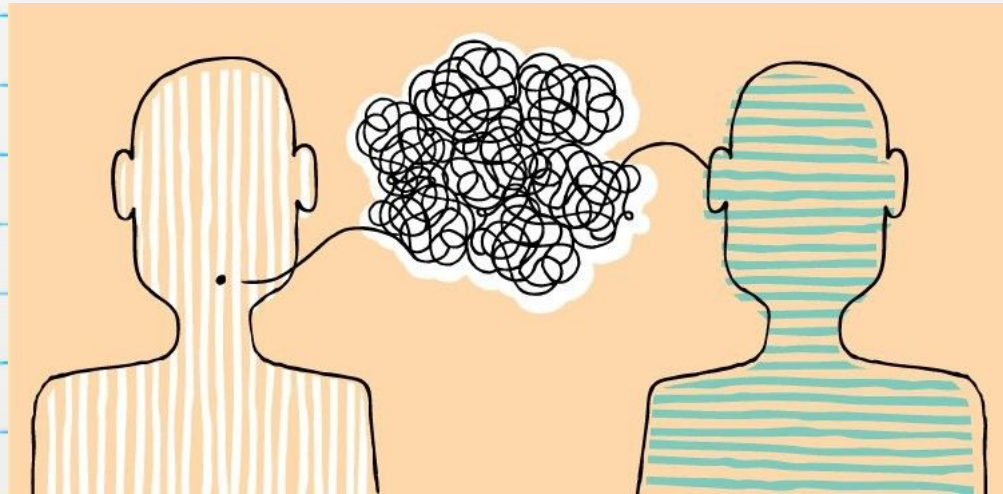- Practical implications for the classroom

Hello!

I am Bárbara Hernandes

@nadalem 🐦

WHY AND HOW DID I GET INVOLVED WITH THE IRST?
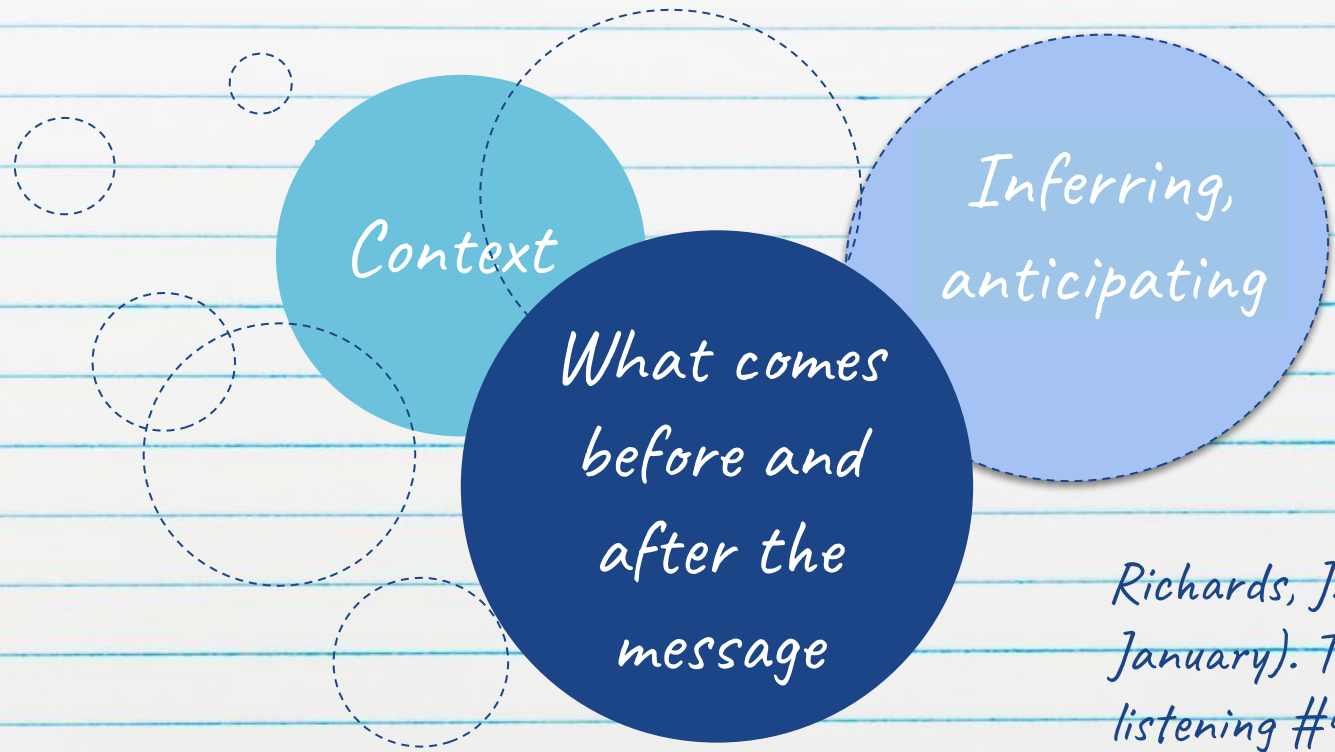

IRST

Top-down listening

"...the use of background knowledge in understanding the meaning of the message"

Morley, C. (2008). Listening: top-down and bottom-up.

Top-down listening

Context

Inferring, anticipating

What comes before and after the message

Richards, J. (2016, January). Teaching listening #4 – Teaching top-down processing.

Bottom-up listening

"... the ability to separate the stream of speech into individual words."

Morley, C. (2008). Listening: top-down and bottom-up.

Top-down listening

Details
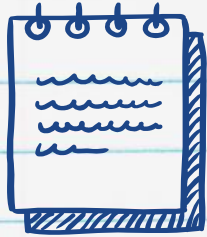
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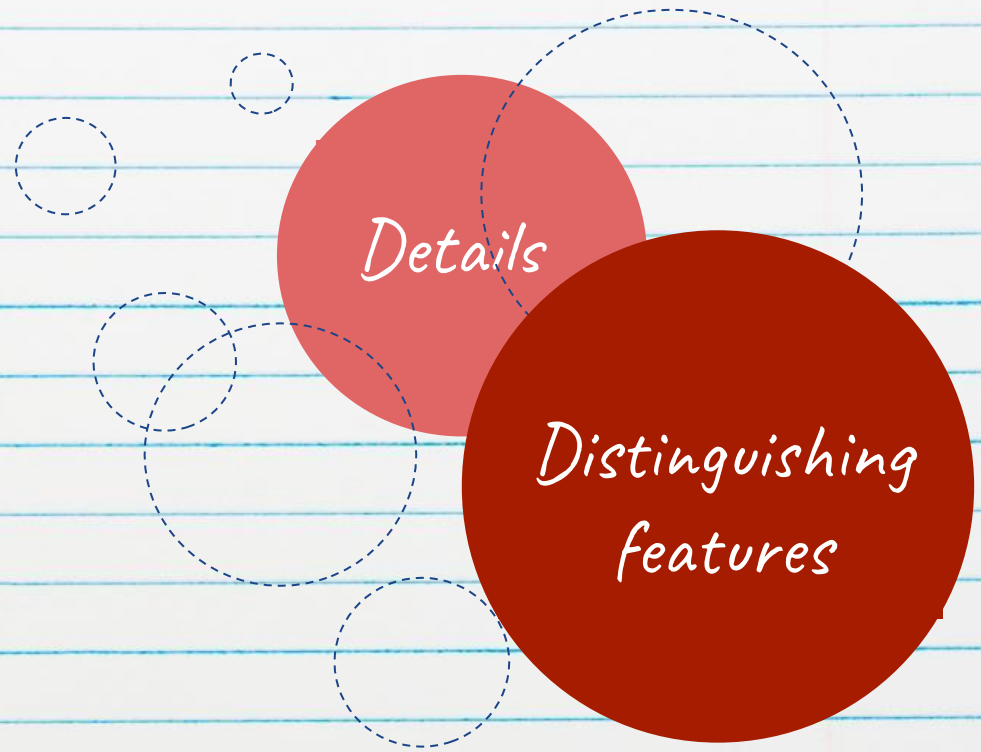
GUILTY

"to improve the teaching of this receptive skill teachers need to use more spontaneous speech models, as well as engage with the sound substance of this speech."
(Cauldwell, 2013)

My questions were:

- *Do students feel like they are only being tested rather than taught when it comes to listening?*

- *Do they prefer a top-down or bottom-up focus and why?*

- *Do they think they are better equipped to understand a piece of listening extract by focusing on a top-down or bottom-up approach?*

When, where and how

Students and level
5 Brazilians and 1 Russian A2 (pre-intermediate) students

Where
ATC

How
Two lessons using different listening approaches. No tests, but rather student's feedback

When
September, 2018

Method

Pre-lesson Questionnaire	Lesson 1 (top-down) / Lesson 2 (bottom-up)	Post-lesson Questionnaire
A few questions such as "what do you do to prepare yourself before a listening task?"	Two listening lessons based on youtube videos. One lesson focused on top-down approaches, whereas the other focused on bottom-up ones.	Questions to find out whether students preferred one lesson over the other, which activities they liked best, etc.

Pre-listening

1) What words do you associate with **cats** and **dogs**?

2) In pairs, say why cats or dogs are better regarding the following skills:

being cute
helping people around the house
hunting
obeying their owners

While-listening

(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TTzlaTMUiO4)

1) Watch Ricky Gervais interview with Ellen DeGeneres and answer the following question:

Why does Ricky prefer having a cat to a dog?

3) Listen and put the following sentences in the order you hear them:

(   ) That's the big difference. But I love them.
(   ) What did you do to make her angry like that?
(   ) It's, I think-- a cat, you can leave it.
(   ) It's like she's totally in charge.
(   ) A dog thinks you're the best thing ever.
(   ) There's the, "Tuna. I want tuna now."

Post-listening

Gervais uses different verbs that relate to dogs and cats. Check the meaning of these verbs with your partner:

I'm **cuddling** her.
But sometimes, if you **hold** a cat wrong...
'Cause I'll **brush** her, and she'll be loving it.
Then I sort of do that to **stroke** her, and she **bites** me.
If you say, "Do you want to **go for a walk**?"

Part 1

Watch the clip of Ricky Gervais with Jimmy Fallon.
(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lnda6BMuR2c&t=3m16s)

Tell your partner what you understood.

How challenging was the speaker?

Part 2

1) Turn the page over and listen and fill in the blanks.

2) Listen again and choose the right highlighted words.

Part 3

1) Listen to these sentences which contain the highlighted words again. Can you clearly hear the difference?

a) My cat doesn't annoy me.
b) They can't help it
c) They're just not my favorite animal, humans.
d) So I've got to remember.
e) It doesn't care.
f) Oh, I didn't have to torture it first.
g) It'll just meet you...
h) It's just, they're the best.
i) So basically, what you're saying is a dog will say...

JF: Who -- I mean, who doesn't annoy you? Is there any human?

RG: My cat. [Laughter] My cat doesn't/does annoy me.

JF: Your cat doesn't...

RG: Most people annoy me. They can't/can help it. They're just (1) _____. They got nothing wrong...I mean, not individuals... Although many individuals do annoy me. [Laughter] But just as a species, they're/they just not my favorite animal, humans. Do you know what I mean? Because...

JF: Well, humans are...

RG: They're all annoying. I'm annoying. Yeah, no. And that's the other thing, right? So, I love my cat, right? But I'm sort of (2) _____.

I'm doing this stuff, I go, "Oh, I got to do that. I got to do that. I got to do this. I got to fly there. I got to do ..." It's like, "(3) _____ _____ _____. Why am I doing this?" - Because they paid me. That's why I'm doing it, right? [Laughter] And I lay awake. And I do everything myself, so I'm/I've got to remember. I do a diary. And I'm lying awake thinking, "I got to do that (4) _____." Right? My cat comes in, falls asleep. Like, 'cause it's got no worries, no conscience. The cat is never... I go, "What's the matter?" - He goes, "Oh, I'm just stressed."

It does/doesn't care. It's got no... A cat... A cat doesn't go... I go, "What's the matter?" - It goes, "Oh, that mouse I killed probably had a family." (5) _____ _____ _____? [Laughter]

JF: Yeah, no, it doesn't think like that.

RG: It doesn't... It doesn't...

THE TONIGHT SHOW STARRING JIMMY FALLON

RICKY GERVAIS

RESULTS

100%
Pre-listening activities helped

5 OUT OF 6
First video (top-down) was easier to understand

5 OUT OF 6
The tasks related to the first video helped them better than the ones used with the second video

RESULTS

5 OUT OF 6

Fill in the gaps helped understand the video

5 OUT OF 6

Favorite activity: fill in the gaps

4 OUT OF THE 5 ABOVE

Fill in the gaps: the one they preferred but also the most difficult one

Implications for the classroom

"Teachers should be embracing the messiness and discomfort of one not being able to decode speech promptly by telling our students "this is the starting point for learning".

Cauldwell, R. (2013). Phonology for Listening.

LESS

Careful Model Speech

MORE

Authentic Speech

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Thanks!

Any questions?

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