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## Teaching French Listening with OER

### Student Dissertation

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## MON: Teaching French Listening with OER (Véronique Massé Du Bois)

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Véronique Massé Du Bois

11 January 2015

### Extra content

#### Abstract

Teaching French listening with OER

Theme: innovation

A key for communication, the process of listening comprehension is still not completely understood. Listening occurs in 60% of any communication but only 25% of it is actually understood. (Treasure, 2011) In foreign language acquisition, it is far less known and researched than reading, speaking and writing, the other three abilities, which form language.

Often a source of anxiety for language learners (Vandergrift, 2004), listening comprehension is also a challenge for teachers. In fact, it is often taken for granted or neglected in teaching. The presentation will discuss the introduction of Open Educational Resources (OER) when teaching French listening comprehension.

French teachers, like other foreign language teachers, are increasingly encouraged to innovate by including new educational resources in their teaching. However, many of them lack the knowledge and are searching for some initial guidance on how to go about it. Relating back to a few initial teacher-training workshops aimed at informing French teachers about innovations in listening comprehension and at how the OER could be included when teaching listening comprehension, this project's goal is to ensure the French teachers' understanding of the listening process to help them in using meaningful OER.

Far from being a passive activity, listening comprehension is an active process, which requires learners to learn how to listen before they can effectively develop their language skills. Research on how a foreign language acquisition demonstrates that effective listening involves more than simply hearing the words. It also showed that learners who learned how to listen are faster at learning a language than learners without any prior guidance on how to listen. (Vandergrift, 2004)

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How can French teachers filter the mass of OER available to them and offer good, appropriate listening comprehension to the language learners? With a better understanding of the listening process in learning a foreign language, French teachers can analyse critically listening comprehension OER and categorise them according to a top-down (using prior knowledge to understand) and a bottom-up listening (detecting sounds and eventually words in order to understand the message) manner. This categorisation offers a structure and a balanced listening course.

## References

Field, J. (2008) *Listening in the Language Classroom*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Treasure, J. (2011) '5 Ways to listen Better, TED talks' Available at [http://www.ted.com/talks/julian\\_treasure\\_5\\_ways\\_to\\_listen\\_better](http://www.ted.com/talks/julian_treasure_5_ways_to_listen_better) (Accessed 7 January 2015).

Vandergrift, L. (2004) 'Listening to learn or learning to listen?' *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics* 24, 3B25.



[Véronique Massé Du Bois](#)

12:33 on 26 January 2015

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follow my project on twitter!

@oerfrenchlisten



[Véronique Massé Du Bois](#)

12:38 on 26 January 2015

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my poster is available on drop box: [https://www.dropbox.com/s/j6ca76ufx07kvqc/poster\\_final.pptx?dl=0](https://www.dropbox.com/s/j6ca76ufx07kvqc/poster_final.pptx?dl=0)

it is also on twitter: @oerfrenchlisten



[Véronique Massé Du Bois](#)

13:01 on 26 January 2015 (Edited 12:37 on 12 February 2015)

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the transcript of my presentation is

available: [https://www.dropbox.com/s/heqczaw7mz10j3p/transcript\\_presentation.pdf?dl=0](https://www.dropbox.com/s/heqczaw7mz10j3p/transcript_presentation.pdf?dl=0)

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**Discussion (9)**

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[Hugo Teixeira](#)

12:47pm 28 January 2015 [Permalink](#)

I've taught English for quite some time, but your abstract reminds of one year when I taught Portuguese. I found that not only were their fewer OERs available for Portuguese (or at least my team wasn't aware of them) but there was also very little guidance available for their use (as opposed to EFL OERs). Is this what you have found regarding French OERs? The approach you describe, equipping teachers with a better understanding language acquisition processes so that they might critically analyze OERs (and perhaps build their own?) intrigues me. I hope I can attend your presentation.



[Stefanie Anyadi](#)

7:50pm 30 January 2015 [Permalink](#)

Fascinating, Veronique. This article might also be useful though it's aimed at EFL: <http://eltj.oxfordjournals.org/content/66/2/156>. Lots of language teachers don't see the value of linguistics and phonetics for their work, it's great that you're drawing on research in those areas to support teachers. I would have liked to listen to your talk but can't make the Monday, unfortunately...



[Véronique Massé Du Bois](#)

10:18am 1 February 2015 [Permalink](#)

Hugo, it was the case until recently. it has been changing though. There are more and more OERs available but many teachers just do not know about it. I have found a great variety of sources from very professional and official to energetic hands-on teachers who develop their own and share them. I have met a number of teachers over the years who seemed to avoid including listening comprehension in their classes. OERs can help!



[Steve Castle](#)

2:53pm 5 February 2015 [Permalink](#)

Hi Veronique, Speaking from an EFL perspective, I totally agree that students need

strategies for listening . In my classes aspects of connected speech are taught, mainly to help with listening rather than pronunciation. Using OER is a good resource as I often find a lot of text book material uninspired or false. For authentic material I often use BBC Radio 4 iplayer or podcasts. I use material such as Tweet of the Day, Farming Today and for listening for numbers the Shipping Forecast. I won't be able to catch your session live, but definitely want to listen to the recording. Best Wishes Steve



[Véronique Massé Du Bois](#)

12:17pm 7 February 2015 [Permalink](#)

Thank you Steve. I also teach EFL. There is much more variety and a lot to choose from. I am hoping that my 'little' project will help a little to develop the understanding of French teachers towards Listening comprehension and OER and as a results develop even more what is available.



[Dr Simon Ball](#)

2:07pm 10 February 2015 [Permalink](#)

Your comments and questions from your live presentation:

- ▶ I can read German easier than I can speak/understand it
- ▶ me too. I can read language but teachers never really helped with speaking/listening so never got confidence
- ▶ I hate lecture rooms with poor acoustics  
Really makes listening hard
- ▶ I think you are right. Even in non language learning, listening is often overlooked
- ▶ Are there cues we can use to prompt better listening?
- ▶ what about on mobile devices - Masletov project have developed lots of open resources for immigrants learning languages via mobile devices. listening on the bus different than at home.
- ▶ Are there different 'levels' of listening then?
- ▶ What about differences in learning styles/personalities/preferred forms of interaction? How will this influence how people are processing information and listening in particular?



[Hugo Teixeira](#)

8:52am 11 February 2015 [Permalink](#)

Come to think of it, when I studied French at university, we had dedicated reading, writing and speaking classes, but no listening classes. I guess it was hoped that students would learn listening incidentally. The only structured listening exercise I can remember doing (in the speaking class) was watching an interview with Jacques Brel. Most of us found it impossible, especially considering he was smoking and drinking throughout the interview! What helped me learn listening was France Info and France Culture. I would listen to these radio stations for hours at a time until it all just sunk in. It's what I recommend to my students today, but your approach is clearly stronger. Thanks for the thought-provoking presentation the other day!



[Véronique Massé Du Bois](#)

11:24am 11 February 2015 [Permalink](#)

- ▶ I can read German easier than I can speak/understand it
- ▶ me too. I can read language but teachers never really helped with speaking/listening so never got confidence
- ▶ What about differences in learning styles/personalities/preferred forms of interaction? How will this influence how people are processing information and listening in particular?

It is quite normal to feel comfortable with reading a foreign language before being able to speak and to understand what is being said. Reading allows time to think, reflect.

Speaking and listening happens fast and there is no (or very little) time to organise and prepare. It is true that a lot about using a foreign language is linked to confidence. The learners must accept the loss of control over the language. Teachers should be teaching how to listen. If the learners only apply a few tips and improved their listening skills while still respecting their style, personality etc., it would make them better listeners. Larry Vandergrift made extensive research on listening skills in learners of French as a foreign language and found that those who had learned how to listen performed much better in tests than those who were expected to "pick up" listening. See an article about this: <http://ideas.time.com/2011/12/07/the-power-of-smart-listening/> (there is a link to his study)

- ▶ I hate lecture rooms with poor acoustics  
Really makes listening hard
- ▶ Are there cues we can use to prompt better listening?

Real life situations mean that listening can include background noise, bad sound quality (on the phone for example). This is when good listening strategies can help. Jill Robbins developed the following page about it: [http://jillrobbins.com/gwu/251/listening/il\\_strats.html](http://jillrobbins.com/gwu/251/listening/il_strats.html)

- ▶ I think you are right. Even in non language learning, listening is often overlooked

Absolutely! There is an interesting talk by Julian Treasure about effective listening: [http://www.ted.com/talks/julian\\_treasure\\_5\\_ways\\_to\\_listen\\_better](http://www.ted.com/talks/julian_treasure_5_ways_to_listen_better) Listening is essential to successful communication whether it happens in a first or foreign language.

- ▶ what about on mobile devices - Masletov project have developed lots of open resources for immigrants learning languages via mobile devices. Listening on the bus different than at home.

Masletov is a great example of inclusion. The local second language is learned by the immigrant with open resources. They aim at communication, situational learning and reinforce a positive feeling for the learner. It helps creating a sense of belonging and develops social inclusion. <http://www.masletov.eu/project/>

- ▶ Are there different 'levels' of listening then?

In language testing, when all four skills (listening, reading, speaking and writing) are

evaluated, it is not unusual for a candidate to have slightly different levels, i.e. higher reading comprehension than listening or speaking. The European levels as described in the Common European Framework for Reference (CEFR) describe 6 levels from A1 (beginner) to C2 (native-like), it is not surprising to get results for example with B1 for listening and B2 for reading. Listening is involved in many aspects of communication and it helps in developing the skills. Learners with listening difficulties should be given tips, guidance to help them. Only too often a learner who struggles with listening, will give up after being frustrated about unsuccessful communication. There is a self-assessment grid which explains each skill and level. [http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/education/elp/elp-reg/Source/assessment\\_grid/assessment\\_grid\\_english.pdf](http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/education/elp/elp-reg/Source/assessment_grid/assessment_grid_english.pdf) This grid applies to all European languages.



[Samantha Marks](#)

9:30am 13 February 2015 [Permalink](#)

These links are brilliant Veronique. It's really interesting how listening goes outside the 'language' part, and that we really should do more on it. I have learned a lot and also been inspired to think about how I can add listening to my trainer training.

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