

The social dimension of FL listening comprehension: From theory to practice in higher education

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The skill of listening comprehension in foreign/second language (L2) teaching and learning has been traditionally considered a “passive-receptive” skill (Vandergrift, 2007). This paper illustrates how the Spanish undergraduate degree programme at UWI, St. Augustine, has applied some of the latest theories in listening comprehension research to move away from that assumption. Based on listening metacognitive strategies (Vandergrift & Goh, 2012); Sociocultural Theory in L2 learning (Lantolf & Thorne, 2007) and the Interaction Approach (Gass & Selinker, 2008) the Spanish programme has managed to innovate the ways in which the teaching and learning of L2 listening comprehension is approached.

This study is framed in the field of applied linguistics and more specifically in L2 teaching and learning research. The paper traces the theoretical shift in teaching and researching listening comprehension as a learner-internal phenomenon to a more socially-oriented dimension. Furthermore, the paper qualitatively explores how students in the context of the study perceived this new social dimension of listening comprehension and how it affected their listening comprehension practices inside and outside of the classroom as part of their undergraduate Spanish curriculum.

Key words: listening comprehension, Spanish, social dimension of listening comprehension, learner autonomy, higher education

Introduction

Historically listening comprehension in foreign/second language (L2)¹ teaching and learning used to be perceived as a “passive-receptive” skill (Vandergrift, 2007; Vandergrift & Goh, 2012). The lack of movement or body articulation, as occurs with speaking or writing, explains this passive connotation. However, there is now a wider understanding that the processes that take place in the mind of the listener are complex and require high order cognitive and metacognitive skills (Vandergrift & Goh, 2012). This understanding has reduced the passive connotation.

¹Although in the context of the study Spanish is a foreign language (FL), the term L2 is used to include both ‘second’ and ‘foreign’ (Mitchell, Myles & Marsden, 2013).

But the complexity of listening comprehension as non-observable skill has resulted in two problematic assumptions. On one hand, listening comprehension has been approached as product-oriented activity, that is, whether the listener-learner was able to get the right answer in a particular listening exercise. On the other hand, this product-oriented enterprise has been approached as an individual task.

A traditional picture of a listening comprehension setting is a language laboratory. In a language laboratory students are sitting in individual booths with headphones on, listening to an excerpt and answering questions. In a setting like this what matters is whether or not the individual listener-learner is able to complete listening comprehension exercises successfully.

Research on L2 listening comprehension has been influenced by research trends in second language acquisition (SLA), which have been mostly of a cognitive and quantitative nature (Cohen & Macaro, 2010). However, recently SLA has witnessed the emergence of Sociocultural Theory (SCT) (Lantieri and Thorne, 2007) as a new alternative approach (Atkinson, 2011) to studying and understanding language learning as a socially-mediated process. SCT has permeated research and practice on listening as a way to favour a more social view of this skill.

The new social dimension that has influenced both SLA and L2 listening comprehension research informed the present study. This paper reports on an intervention implemented in the listening comprehension component of the undergraduate Spanish programme at UWI, St. Augustine. The intervention sought to foster more social collaboration and negotiation as opposed to merely individual and product-oriented listening comprehension practices. The aim of the study was to explore how students perceived and assessed the value of listening as a socially-mediated process.

Problem investigated

The nature of L2 listening comprehension as a skill internal to the learner has led researchers, teachers and learners to approach listening from a product-oriented perspective. This product-oriented approach was for several years the norm in the undergraduate Spanish degree programme at UWI, St. Augustine. Most classes resembled a test situation where students had to answer questions individually. Students expressed dissatisfaction with this methodology as they found it mundane and monotonous. As a result of students' feedback and in light of the new social dimensions salient in the literature, we decided to approach L2 listening comprehension as a socially-mediated process.

Research objectives

This paper seeks to discuss the shift from a cognitive to a more socially-oriented perspective in L2 listening comprehension research and teaching. The paper also seeks to assess the value of incorporating this new social trend in the context of the

Spanish degree programme. How students perceive the social dimension of listening comprehension is taken as a measure to assess the value of the implementation and the approach. This is similar to a study conducted by Vandergrift (2003), in which after a process of reflection students expressed their perceptions and awareness of the process of listening.

Literature review

L2 Listening

L2 Listening comprehension has received increasing attention in recent times (Vandergrift, 2007; White, 2008; Rost 2011; Vandergrift & Goh, 2012). The literature on listening comprehension has mainly been concerned with defining listening from different angles: neurological, linguistic, semantic, pragmatic and automatic processing (Rost, 2011). Attention has also been given to understanding the listening process from cognitive, metacognitive, as well as social perspectives (Vandergrift, 2007). The following is a brief review of some of the key areas discussed in the L2 listening comprehension literature. The first part of the review serves to illustrate how the individual L2 listener-learner has been at the core of the literature. A great deal of attention has been given to the difficulties he or she experiences and the strategies that he or she can employ to cope with the difficulties. The second part of the review focuses on the social dimension of listening.

The affective dimension of listening

Listening is a skill that cannot be observed, which is a difficulty faced by teachers, researchers and learners. Thus, most teaching and research practices have focused primarily on the product of listening. This product approach makes it difficult to understand the process of listening, in other words, how a listener arrives at a comprehension stage (Vandergrift, 2007). The same product approach has an affective impact on learners, which usually results in anxiety (Elkhafaifi, 2005).

Underwood (1989) explains that the main difficulty learners experience is having no control over what they hear, having no control over the speed of the speaker, and thus when they miss a word, they get lost and stop paying attention. Ur (1999, p. 43) similarly lists six difficulties: i) catching the sounds of the L2, ii) the common belief that it is necessary to understand every word, iii) the need for a slow pace of speech as opposed to a natural native speed, iv) need of constant repetition, v) difficulty in “keeping up” with big chunks of information and to predict what is coming, and vi) difficulty in concentrating for long periods of time.

Cognitive strategies

In order to face any L2 comprehension activity, either reading or listening, the literature makes a frequent distinction between top-down and bottom-up processing (Harmer, 2007). Bottom-up and top-down are two common cognitive strategies used by learners (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990). Bottom-up strategies are

text based, that is, listeners base their understanding on the information presented in the text, they tend to focus on words and expressions to build the meaning of the new information carried in the text. Top-down strategies require a more sophisticated approach as listeners use their previous knowledge and experience and link it with the new information being presented to understand it.

The literature highlights the importance of adopting some strategies to enhance the teaching of L2 listening. The activation of prior (Long, 1990) or relevant knowledge (Sperber & Wilson, 1995) are key elements that enable learners to adopt top-down and compensatory strategies. Relevance is a construct that underscores that learners should be engaged with material that has relevant information to them as this triggers true motivation for learning (Rost, 2011).

Social dimension of listening

To a great extent, research on L2 listening has held a cognitive view in terms of conceptualising L2 listening comprehension. This cognitive view has been the norm in most research in SLA (Larsen-Freeman, 2011). Early research on areas such as ‘the good language learner’ (Rubin, 1975) learning strategies (Oxford, 1999) or motivation (Gardner, 1985) began to be investigated from a cognitive point of view and focused on the language learner as a sort of abstract entity with a mind capable of processing information. However, more social dimensions are emerging in an effort to understand second language learning (Atkinson, 2011) and L2 listening comprehension as social phenomena (Vandergrift & Goh, 2012).

Vandergrift (2007, 199) proposes a seven-step instructional design that takes account of both strategy use and social interaction. His instructional design is an effort to raise awareness of metacognitive strategies in listening classroom settings. The seven-step sequence includes:

1. a planning/predicting stage, in which student plan and predict before listening to the excerpt;
2. a first verification stage, in which students verify their initial predictions or hypotheses after listening to the excerpt a first time;
3. students compare their answers with peers, modify and decide on important details that need attention before listening to the excerpt a second time;
4. second verification stage, while listening to the excerpt a second time students selectively attend to points of disagreement, make corrections and write additional details;
5. class discussion in which all members of the class contribute to the reconstruction of the text, main points and details; students reflect on how they were able to arrive at the meaning of words or parts of the text;
6. final verification stage; students listen to the excerpt for a third time for the information revealed in the class discussion and compare it with

the information they were unable to decipher earlier; this time they also have a transcription of the text;

7. reflection stage, students write goals for the next listening activity based on the earlier discussion of the strategies used.

For the purposes of this study it is worth noting how Vandergrift incorporates three verification stages and class discussions that enable students to interact, negotiate meanings and reconstruct the content of the listening excerpt. Furthermore, there is a collective reflection stage that encourages students to assess listening as a process that does not happen in a vacuum. As will be explained in the methodology section, these social aspects are pivotal to the present study.

Similar to Vandergrift (2007), Rost (2011) provides a comprehensive overview of different types of listening practice, task types and activities for each type of listening (Rost, 2011). Of particular interest for this study is Rost's interactive listening, in which the aim is that students become active listeners continuously attempting to clarify meanings. Interactive listening activities include collaborative tasks in which learners interact verbally with others to discover information and/or negotiate solutions. Responsive listening is another type highlighted by Rost. The focus of responsive listening tasks is the learner's response to input. The learner usually seeks opportunities to express her/his own opinions based on aural input.

This brief review has underscored how interaction has become an important part of the listening process. Vandergrift (2007) proposes a sequence that can be implemented in classroom situations, his sequence includes a high degree of interaction in which class participants can verify with their peers the content of a listening text and even reconstruct it as collaborative effort. Rost (2011) describes two types of listening, interactive and responsive, in which the L2 learner-listener is not isolated coping with the difficulties of listening tasks. According to both interactive and responsive listening, the L2 listener-learner actively clarifies meanings and responds to input.

Sociocultural Theory (SCT)

In the last decade the social 'turn' in SLA (Block, 2003) has affected the ways in which L2 researchers investigate L2 learning (Ortega, 2011). This social turn has allowed the emergence of more social constructivist perspectives on L2 learning like Sociocultural Theory (SCT).

SCT is a theory of L2 learning largely inspired by the works of Vygotsky (1978). SCT posits that L2 learning is a mediated process. Lantolf and Thorne (2007, p. 201) argue that "developmental processes take place through participation in cultural linguistic, and historically formed settings such as family life and peer group interaction, and in institutional contexts like schooling". Mediation is a fundamental concept in SCT. Through mediation with cultural artefacts or more experienced others, individuals can develop higher mental processes such as problem-solving, planning, meaning making and so on. In the context of L2

listening comprehension, mediation plays a key role as students' interaction with more experienced others has the potential to help them develop their L2 listening skill.

Other key concepts in SCT include the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), scaffolding, and affordances. ZPD is a mediational interaction with more experienced peers, teachers or adults who can offer support to an individual learner in the form of scaffolding so that the learner can achieve a higher level of development. Scaffolding is a kind of support provided to the learner, which is systematically removed as the learner advances in her/his learning. Affordances are directly related to the context. As learning takes place in social and cultural contexts, these contexts offer affordances, or possibilities of action, and individuals act according to what they perceive the context affords them. Constraints are the opposite of affordances, circumstances present or absent in the context that could hinder development.

From a SCT perspective L2 classrooms are indeed social environments full of affordances and with high levels of mediation and different types of interaction. SLA offers different constructs tied to interaction such as negotiation, recasts and feedback, these constructs are all well documented in the interaction approach. "The interaction approach accounts for learning through input (exposure to language), production of language (output), and feedback that comes as a result of interaction (...). Interaction involves a number of components including negotiation, recasts, and feedback" (Gass & Selinker, 2008, p. 317). The components of the interaction approach are key for the present study.

Some studies have drawn from the principles of SCT as means of mediation. Ableeva (2008) examined the effects of dynamic assessment on L2 listening. The pedagogical approach was based on SCT. The teacher in this study was a mediator who employed ZPD and scaffolding with the students during listening tasks. During the mediation stage, students listened to the same audio text as many times as needed. Students were also encouraged to seek clarification from the teacher and ask questions whenever they faced comprehension problems. At the same time, the teacher provided linguistic and cultural explanations to enhance the comprehension of the text. The use of this pedagogical approach allowed the teacher to identify the source of listening problems experienced by learners and provide the necessary support.

Cross (2009) conducted a quasi-experimental classroom-based study that employed ZPD as a way to teach students listening strategies. The study sought to compare two different groups in strategy use. The experimental group received explicit strategy instruction, while the comparison group did not. The experimental group made more significant progress than its counterpart in post test scores. It was also suggested that peer interaction and collaboration may have been factors that positively influenced participants' collective awareness of strategies to enhance understanding.

The study

Research paradigm - Qualitative

Research in SLA and L2 listening comprehension has been mostly cognitive and quantitative in nature (Cohen & Macaro, 2010). Typically interventions in the area of L2 listening administer a pre and a post test to determine whether or not students' listening 'improved'. There are also studies that use control groups seeking to make comparisons. As discussed above the problem with these kinds of research practices is that they only explore the product of listening, but they cannot offer information on the process of listening. Furthermore, the learner-listener is not viewed as a social being immersed in a social context.

Vandergrift (2007) advocates the use of more qualitative approaches to research in L2 listening. This study follows that recommendation. Ontologically, we believe that if we are studying the social dimension of listening there should be a more dialogical process to get insights into the practices and experiences from the lenses of the students (Creswell, 2007). How they perceive that the negotiation of meaning they engaged in with their classmates contributed to their understanding of listening materials is the focal point of the study.

Action research: reflect-act-evaluate-reflect-act...

Action research is done by teachers for teachers who gather information to gain insight and develop reflective practice, as well as to effect positive changes in the teaching and learning environment (Mills, 2007). Hendricks (2006, p.9) describes action research as a "systematic inquiry based ongoing reflection". As such she understands action research as a cycle of reflection, action and evaluation.

In the case of the present study the reflection stage took place in 2009. The area of reflection was the listening comprehension class and how this skill was taught following a product-oriented approach. Students' only responsibility was to be able to get the right answers to different listening passages. The classes resembled an exam situation with a lot of individual drilling. Students' feedback usually suggested that the classes were mundane and monotonous. As such, a re-evaluation of the mode of delivery was necessary.

Around that time, 2009, the web 2.0 emerged and interactive tools such as YouTube grew significantly. There was also a lot more content available in Spanish language. Seeking to remove the mundane perception attached to the listening class we turned to YouTube to search for more engaging content. However, we faced the difficulty that streaming from the language laboratory would not always be possible because of Internet speed.

That is when we decided to change the traditional paradigm of the teacher having full control of the listening materials. Students were given the responsibility to take control of the listening materials (Benson, 2011) from their homes and practice self-regulated listening.

In class students were expected to have familiarised themselves with the material prior to the session. The listening exercises in class adapted Vandergrift's

(2007) seven-step social and metacognitive model explained above. Given that in many instances students watched the content prior to the lesson, higher priority was assigned to the verification stages, which we perceive as social in nature, than the other stages for which students are supposed to listen to the material for the first time in class.

Phases of the study and data collection strategies

This study had three phases. The first phase was the action research implementation in 2009 with students of the second year of the degree programme.

During this first phase data were collected in the form of open-ended surveys (60) and copious field notes produced by the main teacher-researcher and a few teaching assistants. The second phase of the study took place a year later, in 2010, when six students consented to be interviewed to provide their retrospective accounts on the listening implementation.

One of the outcomes of the 2009 implementation was that the Spanish programme at UWI, St. Augustine decided to join the skills of listening and conversation, which were taught as separate components before. The aims were to incorporate a more integrated approach to language teaching and learning and to introduce an 'interaction approach' (Gass & Selinker, 2008) to engage students in meaningful conversations and negotiation of meaning based on the input from audiovisual materials.

The third phase of the study took place five years later. As part of the cyclical nature of action research, we thought it was pertinent to reflect once again on the social dimension of listening in our context. Thus we decided to revisit students' perceptions and to reassess the value of an approach to listening that is becoming more relevant in the literature. This time we administered an open-ended survey with students of the second and third year of the degree programme. We chose them as our sample population given that they have more experience in the programme than first year students. We received forty responses.

All students during all phases of the study were informed of the purpose of the research, they accepted and consented to be part of the study. Their names have all been removed from the illustrative quotations to protect their identities.

Research questions

Guiding our inquiry were the following questions:

- a. What happens when a process-approach to listening and a focus on negotiation of meaning and interaction are introduced in the context of the study?
- b. What are the perceived affordances (or constraints) in a listening implementation that relies on social interaction and negotiation of meaning?
- c. Is there any difference in how the implementation was perceived a few years ago with how it is perceived now?

Emerging themes and discussion

All qualitative data from 2009, 2010 and 2015 were put together analysed, with special attention to the open-ended survey of 2015. Paper-based surveys from 2009 were colour-coded. Interview transcripts as well as the surveys collected in 2015 were analysed using NVivo 10. There were also instances of collaborative coding as recommended by Smagorinsky (2008). The following are the most relevant emerging themes:

L2 listening: Individual anxiety vs. positive social interdependence

An emerging theme in phase 1 in 2009 (Mideros & Carter, 2014) was the comparison between the two approaches to listening, that is, a product-approach versus a process-approach. That is a theme worth noting:

1. 'Session B is better because it does not have so much rigidity as in session A. In the latter session, it is set in an exam mode which creates a bit of tension and the listening becomes a hard task or a duty one must do'

(Anonymous answer, survey 2009)

In illustrative quotation 1. session B refers to the audiovisual interactive session and session A refers to an audio-only 'product-approach' class. The student's comment illustrates what the listening class was like before the implementation of the action research. It is clear that the 'exam-mode which creates a bit of tension' takes us back to the individual approach to teaching and researching listening, which brings to the table anxiety-related issues (Elkhafaifi, 2005).

2. 'I liked that we were able to look at the videos provided and give responses in the class so no one was left behind.'

(Anonymous answer, survey 2009)

3. 'we do speak about the videos assigned in class, and I think that it helps a great deal to clarify phrases or ideas we have misinterpreted and encourages us to talk, rather than put pressure on students to come up with talking points in another language that they may not be entirely confident with. For this reason I'd say that it does help to improve listening skills as talking about/using the videos as focal points to converse about certain issues definitely challenges us to be more active listeners so that instead of just trying to grasp particular ideas, we make more of an effort to be engaged; it also helps to build our vocabulary which ultimately betters us as language students.'

(Third year student, survey 2015)

Quotes 2. and 3. describe learners as active listeners and social participants of a learning situation in which they engage in higher levels of negotiation that go beyond simply getting the right answer. L2 listening acquires a new meaning and students positively depend on each other to negotiate the meaning of the content presented in the L2 listening excerpts. These also reinforce the importance

of Vandergriff's (2007) verification stages as powerful social and metacognitive strategies in L2 listening instruction.

Peer-to-peer mediation/collaboration as a measure of self-monitoring and self-assessment

In a traditional L2 listening setting the teacher assesses whether learners got the right answer or not. However, in cases where verification stages are implemented and learners are encouraged to compare their answers and collectively reconstruct the content of the listening text, students' engage in processes of self-monitoring, self-assessment and co-assessment.

4. 'I do talk about the videos that we have watched in conversation class with my classmates. I think this practice is great because it helps us to share what we have heard since not everyone can pick up the same bits and pieces of information. It improves my listening skills because I go back to the videos to see if I can pick up/hear the things that my friends have heard that I haven't.'

(Second year student, survey 2015)

Quote 4. illustrates how in advanced learning situations, students can learn from one another and not only from the ideal native speaker or the teacher, who functions as the ultimate more experienced other. The data suggest that collaboration and negotiation of meaning in L2 listening settings work as mediational tools. The quote also illustrates that this particular student captured the affordances that collaboration offers to improve her listening. This theme contrasts with Ableeva's (2008), in which the teacher was the only mediator. The present study gave a lot more importance to students as collaborators and a relationship of positive interdependence. Cross' (2009) comparison between two groups suggests that collaboration may have been a factor in participants' understanding. The present study reinforces that notion. Peer-to-peer collaboration is a key affordance found in L2 listening comprehension classrooms, particularly in advanced settings.

Warning! More capable others might monopolise the discussion

One of the principles of collaboration that we identified in this study is that weaker students benefit from stronger students. However, one of the dangers of this practice is that more capable students can monopolise the class discussion bringing issues of participation in the classroom (Norton, 2001):

5. 'I think the group discussions in class do help. Because it ensures that everyone is on the same page with what the video means. However most times the group discussions are steered only by a few students. But I generally like the idea of discussing it as a class before answering the questions. It's as if everyone adds a piece to the puzzle.'

(Third year student, 2015)

Quote 5. illustrates a constraint that can arise in a setting that promotes negotiation of meaning and collaboration. In a case like this all actors, both teachers

and students, should act as mediators to allow a healthy balance in turn-taking. Undoubtedly weaker students benefit from the perspective of stronger students, but stronger students who appear as ‘more capable others’ can also be intimidating to students who are shy to let their voices be heard.

Formal assessment: an ‘individual’ enterprise

In the study conducted in phase 1 2009, part of the formal assessment was collaborative. At the time some students displayed some resistance to this practice:

6. ‘I remember I didn’t really like group work. I think we had either one or two tests. I remember not liking them. I didn’t like having to do an exam with somebody else, in terms of my mark having to depend on them or their mark having to depend on mine.’
(Interview, 2010)

The practice of collaborative assessment no longer takes place but has been replaced with online tests, in which students can complete listening tests at their leisure from their homes. One of the assumptions was that students would use tools such as Skype to get together to complete the tests. Students in the study partly rejected that assumption stating that they complete their online tests individually:

7. ‘I do it [the online test] home by myself and usually take breaks every now and again. If there is a really hard question I may consult a friend, who is most likely having a hard time with that question too, but that is usually it.’
(Second year student, 2015)
8. ‘I complete my online listening tests individually. However, if I am unsure about certain phrases or words due to how the speaker articulates himself, then I would collaborate with one or two other members to find out what exactly they heard during their listening process, as to give me a sense if we are on the same track or not.’
(Second year student, 2015)
9. ‘I complete my online listening tests by myself. However, I consulted my classmate once for her interpretation of the question so I could ensure that I listen out for the right response. I never consulted classmates for the answers.’
(Third year student, 2015)

Quotes seven to nine reveal that experienced students, despite their pronouncements, did seek seek guidance whenever they find a difficulty. Although this practice could be looked at as cheating, a process-oriented approach to listening does not reject it completely since the outcome is not the product of listening but the process of it. By admitting that they consult their friends in cases when certain fragments or questions are difficult, students are actually implementing a social strategy that has been used in class. Nevertheless, there is general consensus that formal assessment is an individual undertaking and students try, to the best of their

ability, to complete online tests individually even if there is no one monitoring them as in a traditional L2 assessment setting.

Conclusion

This paper sought to answer three questions to assess the value of a social dimension of L2 listening. The first question deals with what happens when a 'process-approach' that fosters social interaction is implemented. In this study students became active listeners and reconceptualised their view of the L2 listening skill. The data suggest that listening became a social enterprise that led to interaction and active negotiation of meaning (Gass & Selinker, 2008) among students. The second question deals with the perceived affordances or constraints of the implementation. The data suggested that mediation and collaboration afforded opportunities for students' self-monitoring and self-assessment of their listening based on the interactions with their peers (Lantolf & Thorne, 2007). Furthermore, in advanced settings, the role of 'more experienced other' is not exclusive to the teacher, peers also become more experienced others who mediate learning. However, this could potentially pose a difficulty. More experienced language learners can take full control and monopolise the class discussion, which in turn could result in issues of participation (Norton, 2001). It is therefore highly recommended that teachers and learners assume the role of moderators to encourage everyone to participate. The third question deals with the difference between students' perceptions of the first implementation in 2009 compared with current students' perceptions. The data suggest that students in all phases of the study held positive perceptions of the more social dimension of listening. However, L2 listening assessment continues to be perceived as an individual undertaking. Yet, students in phase 3 admitted that they sought guidance from their peers when they found difficult questions or difficult fragments. The main difference is that in phase 1, assessment took place in pairs and in class, whereas in phase 3 assessment was conducted individually and online. Therefore, students did not perceive that their mark depended on anyone else as a constraint.

Current theories on second language learning such as Sociocultural Theory (Lantolf and Thorne, 2007); interaction approach (Gass & Selinker, 2008) and social and metacognitive approaches to L2 listening (Vandergrift, 2007; Vandergrift & Goh, 2012) provided a solid ground for an implementation that sought to give more prominence to the social aspect of L2 listening. Engaging students in active collaboration and negotiation of meaning in the L2 listening class made them more active listeners. The implementation of a social dimension of listening provided students with social mediational tools to self-monitor and self-assess their understanding in L2 listening based on verification and reconstruction of listening texts. Students understood that their classmates are also mediational tools that can serve as 'more experienced others' Collaboration and assessment in L2 listening continues to be an area in need of further exploration. The emerging themes of this study; especially that of assessment, have implications for the Caribbean context

where, according to Carter (2006), students are heavily influenced by examinations. This paper adds to the dialogue on L2 learning in the Caribbean region (Bufoy-Bastick, 2010; Carter, 2009; Carter, 2003; Nzengou-Tayo & Peters, 2006) with a perspective on L2 listening, a skill often neglected in L2 teaching and learning research.

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