

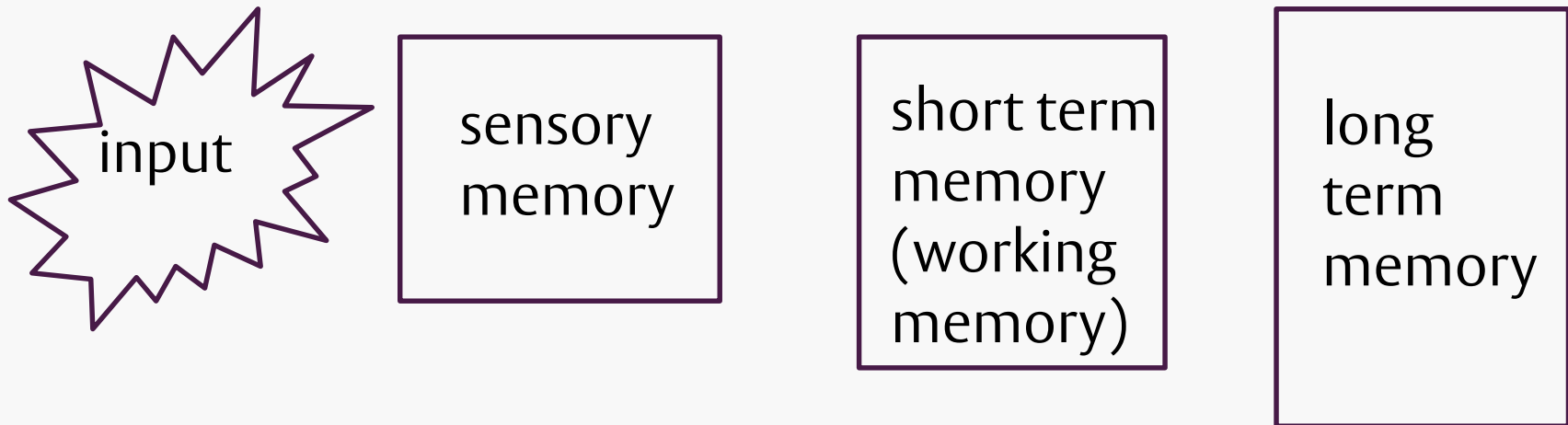
# IFP lecture delivery: maximising non-native speaker student engagement

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# Overview

- Part 1: Listening
  - Review of ‘memory’
  - Cognitive complexity of listening
  - The listening process
- Part 2: Lecturers
  - Lecture listening
  - How mid-level listeners behave
  - The importance of vocabulary
  - Phonological pauses
  - Discourse markers: informational / attitudinal
  - Summary

# Classic model of memory



Goal: processes (e.g. word recognition ) become automatic and transfer to LTM; automatic processes make little demand on WM

## Working memory

(psycholinguistic term for ‘short term memory’)

stores information temporarily

**(*limited capacity*)**

## Long term memory

2 functions of LTM re language:

- 1) database of linguistic knowledge (vocab, grammar etc)
- 2) knowledge of the world

# Cognitive complexity of listening

- you can't control the speed of the speaker
- no word boundaries
- you don't know all the vocabulary
- you have to think back to what you heard before in order to work out what you're hearing now....
- ....and while you're thinking back, the person is still speaking

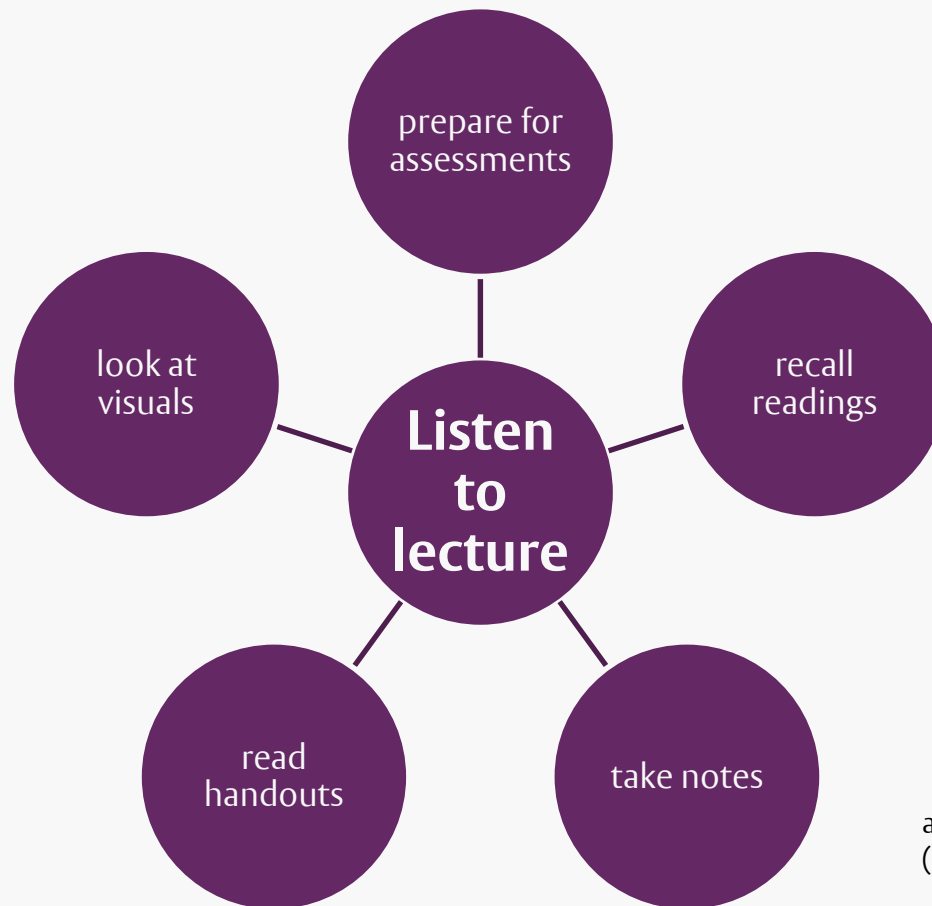
# The psycholinguistic view of the listening process

- we don't construct meaning by decoding 'word for word' on a 1 to 1 match
- we do not make decision about the meaning of what we hear until we have enough evidence
- we carry forward multiple interpretations of what we hear – some more certain than others (held in WM)
- we constantly form and revise hypotheses about the message (*"the claim by the researchers who disagreed with Anderson's idea was that ...."*)

# Key aspects of listening

- input is highly variable (next April, next semester)
- listener allocates word boundaries (a sister, assist her)
- listener processes words in real time (holds string of words in WM to enable parsing and disambiguation) while speech continues (*the article that I gave you yesterday that refers to current trends is the one we'll look at today*)

# Lecture listening



adapted from Flowerdew & Miller (2005)



# Practicalities

A considerable amount of information is not decoded by mid-level listeners (CEFR B2/IELTS 5.5 to 6).

171 participants reported 3.5k words (in phrases)

approx. 45% correctly recognised

approx. 36% blank response

approx. 18% reported the wrong word

# Practicalities

- Novice listeners find ‘decoding’ and ‘parsing’ extremely challenging.
- Results in cognitive overload: they have to be content with a first impression
- Means **no time for meaning building, integrating new information into old**, e.g.
  - recognising supporting and opposing arguments, integrating different propositions, identifying topics and sub-topics

# A domino of misunderstandings

*“As pieces of information accrue during a speech event, they are progressively integrated into the listener’s overall recall of what has been said, which includes not just the points made but the line of argument that links them”*

(Field 2013:92)



approx. 54% blank or wrong responses – students may be **carrying forward inaccurate interpretations of the lecture**, interpreting new information based on mishearings

# Part 2: what can lecturers do to help?

# Vocabulary: automatic recognition

*“lexical ignorance [is] ... the main obstacle to listening comprehension ...”*

*(Kelly 1991)*

- listeners need an automatic link between the form of a word as uttered by a speaker and its range of senses

*Is it possible for you to provide students with a glossary of terms (the week before, at the beginning of the course)?*

*Automatic decoding = more cognitive capacity for building meaning)*

# Pauses at phonological paragraph boundaries

**Speakers naturally pause between phonological paragraphs.**

At the beginning of a paragraphs, voices tend to be higher in pitch and stronger in stress.

Pitch and stress gradually lower towards the end (Yule, 1980).

*Is it possible for you to try to maintain pitch and stress; non-native speakers use these features to aid decoding.*

# Discourse markers: informational

- Convey the intended logical relations of ideas  
i.e. explicitly numerated subpoints, signalled prominence and logical relations among ideas, e.g.:
  - previews (there are four stages of culture shock)
  - topic shifters (let's go back a minute),
  - summarizers (to sum up so far)
  - emphasis markers (let me repeat it)
  - relators (goes along with that),
  - logical connectives ( first, second, and, or)

(Jung, 2006:1931)

# Discourse markers: informational

**Remember: non native speakers - no time for meaning building, integrating new information into old, e.g.**

- recognising supporting and opposing arguments, integrating different propositions, identifying topics and sub-topics

*Is it possible for you to use more discourse markers, and make them more salient (enunciate them with stress, pause afterwards to allow time for processing)?*



# Discourse markers: attitudinal

“devices that serve as directional guides to signal how listeners should interpret the incoming information” (Tyler, 1994). e.g.:

- A **crucial** piece of research
- **In line with** Johnson, Richards **also** suggested X
- A **key** theory is
- Singh’s theory is **less popular**

*Is it possible for you to use more discourse markers, and make them more salient (enunciate them with stress, pause afterwards to allow time for processing)?*

# Provide a detailed plan

*Help listeners build meaning and integrate new ideas into your intended structure.*

***Provide detailed plan of the lecture, showing how topics, readings, theories, and ideas are linked.***

***Give students a hard copy as a ‘map’ of the lecture so you can regularly refer to it to keep them on the right path.***

***Avoid a domino of misunderstandings***

# Suggestions for lecturers

- Consider cognitive demands of listening
  - Figurative language (metaphor, idiom)
  - Referents that refer to a concept (this notion, this property, this theory etc.)
  - Anaphors - listeners must link *she, him, that, what I just said* to their antecedents.
  - Provide glossary of topic-specific terms
  - Restate/summarise points using **the same words**
- Use more salient, meaning-bearing discourse markers

# Suggestions for lecturers

- *Integration*
  - Help listeners integrate new items within the developing discourse representation.
  - Clearly state the links between new information and the information that preceded it
- *Structure building.*
  - Help listeners identify the relative importance of each item/construct a hierarchical pattern of what has been said

# Suggestions for lecturers: PP presentations

- Care: multi-modal input can lead to cognitive overload
- Allow time to read graphs, images etc before you start speaking
- Allow time to read the text – helps them to anticipate spoken input
- Take care when paraphrasing series of slides – students may not make connection between spoken and visual input
- Don't digress, or if you do, 'minimise' your slides to avoid students trying to connect spoken and visual input

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