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The Art of Listening in an Educational Perspective
Listening reception in the mother tongue

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Abstract
The purpose is to contribute to the theory and practice of listening reception as one of the four language arts in Swedish as a school subject. The object of inquiry is *The Art of Listening* (Adelmann 2009) as a Swedish example from a Scandinavian context, compared to mainstream listening research in the USA. The problem explored is: How can we, as researchers and teachers, handle some of the problems within international listening research and adapt listening research to a Scandinavian context. Results of the study show that *The Art of Listening* is mainly influenced by listening research in the USA, but also offer an alternative theoretical framework for listening by the Russian scholar Mikhail M. Bakhtin (1895–1975). The main conclusion is that with an educational approach and an alternative theoretical framework it is possible to work with an expanding and including perspective in listening research and listening education.

Keywords: listening, listening process, listening skills, listening strategies, listening reception, listening response, dialogue, talk in interaction, conversation, speech

Introduction
Even though scientific research in the field of listening has been overwhelming in the last few decades, this young branch of science lacks a theoretical framework and has been revealed to be in an initial discovery stage of theoretical development (Brownell, 1996; McKenzie & Clark, 1995; Wolvin, 2010).

This becomes evident in *The Art of Listening* (Adelmann, 2009) where I try to put the research pieces together in an educational perspective and for the purpose of mapping the development of listening in Swedish as a school subject. Some traditional problems within listening research in an international perspective thereby emerge, like the definition of listening (1), the listening process (2), listening reception (3), different listening skills and strategies for different purposes (4), analytical listening tools and methods (5), listening response (6) and listening assessment (7).

The aim of this article is therefore to discuss these seven problems as a challenge to international listening research and to give a Swedish example of a socio-cultural

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approach founded on qualitative research that could include and invite the participation of researchers from a variety of disciplines.

The listening field

We need competent listening skills in order to learn. In fact, language learning comes more or less through listening and children who are better listeners are also better learners (Lundsteen, 1979). In ordinary education on different levels listening is necessary for activities like following directions, talk in interaction, retelling stories (that have been heard), literary conversation, asking questions, (podium) speech, arguing and taking notes. Thus, the main purpose of teaching listening in school is learning, and education in listening is as crucial as education in talking, reading and writing.

The first major research in the listening field was Paul T. Rankin's dissertation in 1926, *The measurement of the ability to understand spoken language*.[1] Another milestone publication was *Factors accounting for differences in comprehension of material presented orally in the classroom* (1948), by Ralph G. Nichols (1907–2005), who later was called the 'Father of the Field of Listening' in the USA. The foundation of the International Listening Association (ILA)[2] in the 1970s, the establishment of the *International Journal of Listening* in the 1980s and the acknowledgement of the definition of "listening" in the 1990s all indicate the establishment of "listening" (Library of Congress Subject Headings, LCSH)[3] as a research field. This field consists of different areas like health, business, education, communication and social sciences, with the participation of researchers from a variety of disciplines.

In Scandinavia listening studies in education and the mother tongue started in the late 1990s. The Norwegian researcher Hildegunn Otnes described listening as a discipline in the mother tongue and pointed out the importance of relational listening in conversation with concepts like "attention" and "response" (1997; 1999a; 1999b). In her dissertation (2007) she uses an extended notion of listening in a qualitative study, examining chat on the Internet and showing the importance of listening strategies and how the participants indicate listening in different ways.

My own public research in listening started with a historical review where I stated the simple fact that in the beginning there was "the listening man", long before man could talk, and later on read and write (Adelmann, 1998). I also pointed out the importance of a listening attitude in the development of a democratic school. My dissertation, *Listening to voices: An extended notion of listening in an educational perspective* (Adelmann, 2002), the first one in Scandinavia to deal with listening reception, is a qualitative study drawing on four investigations[4]. The first part of the dissertation examines the listening skill in Swedish educational documents and national curriculum from 1842 to 2000. Results of the study show that the listening skill is only slowly approaching the same status as talking, but standards for listening are still missing in the syllabus for Swedish as a school subject.

The second part explores the semantic listening domains followed by a determination of the meaning of the 'listening' concept in the Swedish language. The study results outline three distinct meanings in Swedish: the perception of hearing, the constructing of meaning with attentive listening, and the metaphorical meaning in phrases such as "listening to voices". Examples from Swedish concordance show that the listener is able to listen in different ways and to turn their attention in time and space. Moreover, the Swedish concept of 'listen' covers a wide semantic field and foregrounds three dimensions, namely social, dynamic and holistic.

The two empirical parts of the study concern listening in the classroom to talk in interaction with eight Swedish students in teacher education over a six-month period. The polyphonic classroom is examined through the notion of what I have called 'reported listening', with regard to which voices the participants refer to, their 'voice response', and how they use those voices in talk in interaction, their 'voice use'. Results of the former empirical part indicate that some of the students have a broad and some a narrow *listening repertory*, and the group seems to be an important contributor to the individual's dialogic learning (Adelmann, 2001a; 2001b; Wolvin, 2010:39). Results of the later empirical part suggest that the voice use principally has an argumentative function and that some of the students use several different functions and others use only but a few in their *listening profile*. Further, four *listening positions* emerge in the material, namely the "questioner", the "refiller", the "synthesiser" and the "inquirer" (Adelmann, 2003).

When I published the first Scandinavian textbook about listening, *The Art of Listening*: *Pedagogical listening in school and education* (Adelmann, 2009), I tried to present listening as a modern reception discipline in the mother tongue, equal to the language arts of talking, reading and writing. In doing so, I had to handle some of the traditional problems within listening research and adapt the traditional and historically dominant American listening research to a Scandinavian context. In the following I therefore outline some of the consequences and present seven points of departure in listening reception[5].

The definition of listening

Theory is closely related to a clearly defined concept of listening. In 1996 the International Listening Association (ILA) approved the following definition:

> Listening: the process of receiving, constructing meaning from, and responding to spoken and/or nonverbal messages (Purdy & Borisoff, 1997:6).

This definition was also accepted by the National Communication Association (NCA) as a point of departure for listening goals in the "K-12 standards and competencies document" (*Competent Communicators*, 1998:1). But in the Scandinavian context there are two fundamental problems with that definition: the transfer model of communication and the individual psychological perspective.

Firstly, there has been a tendency within traditional language research to look upon listening as a skill that is more or less separated *from* speech or an aspect of talk in interaction with a focus *on* speech. In the first case, the approach is usually a communication or information processing model where the listener is answering when addressed, which means that the listener is the 'receiver' of a 'message' from a 'sender' in a very simple and plainly transmitting system. This transfer model of communication, the so-called conduit metaphor (Linell, 1988; 2011), seems to imply that listening is one distinguished process where a fixed meaning is cognitively constructed prior to the delivery of the message to the receiver.[6] In the second case, the listener takes a more active part in talk in interaction and supports the talker verbally and/or nonverbally with different kinds of feedback while listening (Ericsson, 1997; Green-Vänttinen, 2001).

But in a dialogical perspective (Bakhtin, 1984; 1999) talk in interaction with the oral activities talking and listening appears not to involve discrete activities, easy to separate from one another, but can instead be described as a continuous process or multiple processes (Brownell, 1996). Listening clearly does not stop while you are talking, so from a dialogical perspective talk in interaction can be viewed as a simultaneous process of expression and reception (Adelmann, 2009:63) where the listener talks and "[s]peaking is listening" (Michael Holquist in Adelmann, 2002:122). Thus, listening and talking are dialogical and intertwined processes. A definition of listening influenced by the conduit metaphor, with the concept of listening as *one* process and notions like 'receiver' and 'message' (or 'sender'), is therefore misleading when it comes to describing the dialogical part of listening.

Secondly, the ILA definition of listening seems to imply an individual psychological perspective. But listening is much more than an individual psychological process because "[t]he listener is imbued with and constantly imbibes the sociocultural-linguistic environment" (Purdy, 1991:60-61). The listener is clearly not alone in "constructing meaning", but part of the contextual dimension of culture and society, where we construct meaning together and are all the time influenced by the meaning that is already constructed. Listening is therefore not solely a psychological activity, but also a social and relational process in a relational context (Rhodes, 1993), or maybe rather in different dimensions of contexts (Adelmann, 2002; Linell, 1998).

In a Swedish classroom the talking and listening is very much a social activity within a group, with listening and linguistic actions like attention and verbal and nonverbal responses. The social and relational dimensions of listening are also observable, which is important when it comes to the listening process (2), listening reception (3) and listening assessment (7). Thus, we can argue that the ILA definition lacks "a social, a dynamic and a holistic dimension" (Adelmann, 2002:289), with a dialogical and relational communication perspective. One could also say there is a need for an expanded model of the definition of listening, including the dialogical perspective and the contextual dimension of culture and society.

But even though there are some differences among experts in the listening field there is also some consensus regarding a definition of listening (Brownell, 1996; Glenn, 1989; Lundsteen, 1979; Wolvin & Coakley, 1996). If we look for commonalities among experts we can conclude that listening is a discrete activity (Spearritt, 1962), similar to but separated from reading, and a complex process (Brownell, 1996) where there is an important difference between hearing and listening. But the listening process includes hearing, and the listening process is completed with a response, overt or covert, verbal or nonverbal. From a Bakhtinian perspective, one could add that the response is oral or written and comes immediately or (much) later (Bakhtin, 1999).

The listening process

Different definitions of listening would lead to different models of the listening process. One widely respected and used model is constructed by Judi Brownell (1996) and consists of six components in the so-called HURIER listening process. The six components are Hearing, Understanding, Remembering, Interpreting, Evaluating and Responding. According to the HURIER model we have six listening tasks, and there are of course many skills of listening reception associated with each of the six components, "skills that either indicate or facilitate each stage" (Brownell in Wolvin, 2010:147).

Since the listening process is chiefly about covered processes that cannot be observed directly, all listening process models are more or less hypothetical constructions. Analogous to research in the reading process the researchers conclude that listening has taken place and that listening processes are in existence according to observed phenomenon or behaviour. But listening communication is not solely composed of internal processes (like understanding, remembering, interpreting and evaluating) since certain dimensions of listening are relational and therefore also observable. Not only is auditory and/or visual perception controllable, but so too are different kinds of attention and response.[7]

Listening is a social and contextual act. Our communication partner can only judge our listening qualities by our situational listening behaviours. This means that "effective listening" (Wolvin & Coakley, 1996) must also be seen as "the listener's adaptability to that context" (Spitzberg & Cupach, 1984, in Ridge, 1993:9). Brownell (1996:266) points out that it is important to "respond in a manner that will facilitate shared meanings, contribute to accomplishing tasks, and develop satisfying relationships".

In the Swedish classroom the assessment of speech or conversation only concerns the observable part of the listening process model. This implies that the attention and the response from the listening teacher to the listening student or, the listening student to the listening teacher or, another listening student, enable the teacher and the student to be aware of their repertory of verbal and nonverbal responses. They can improve and develop the repertory, or consciously choose a listening and a response strategy in different kinds of situations, and this capacity facilitates different kinds of interaction in various kinds of contexts.

According to the National Agency for Education in Sweden, the basis for assessing the level of knowledge should be grounded in observable skills. This means that in the Swedish classroom the listening model in practice is usually reduced to observable skills like hearing, with attention, and responding, with verbal and/or nonverbal response. The observable part of the process allows us to make assumptions about the internal process, the intrapersonal communication, but we focus on the external process, the interpersonal communication. The observable part of the process also means that it is easier to validate the listening process (Fitch-Hauser & Hughes, 1988), which is important when it comes to listening reception (3), listening response (6) and listening assessment (7).

But maybe our focus on listening-centred communication in the classroom from a behavioural approach has made us pay less attention to the importance of the covered processes and the intrapersonal communication in the listening process, like understanding, remembering, interpreting and evaluating. If we look at the listening task of remembering, for instance, current attention and working memory research by Torkel Klingberg (2007; 2011), a professor of cognitive neuroscience at Sweden's Karolinska Institute, huge consequences for learning and listening in the classroom become apparent. Thus, perhaps it is time for traditional classroom research in the subject of Swedish, including my own, to comprise and invite not only pedagogy, psychology and social sciences, but also disciplines like information technology, sound technology and cognitive neuroscience.

Listening reception

From a language perspective, we have an oral language and a written language. In the oral language as well as in the written language we have two different activities: the oral language is about talking and listening, while the written language is about writing and reading. Consequently, in our language as a whole we have four language arts, namely reading, writing, talking and listening. One could also say that the expressive part of the language consists of the activities talking and writing, while listening and reading belongs to the receptive parts of the language. Thus, in the mother tongue we have (at least) two reception disciplines – listening and reading (Adelmann, 2002:266; 2009:52).

If we look at it this way, modern research about reception in the mother tongue started at approximately the same time for both reading and listening. In the 1920s I.A. Richards (1967 [1924]) conducted his famous research in the science of literature about English students' poetry comment and literature experience, while in 1926 Paul T. Rankin made a milestone within listening research with his dissertation about *The measurement of the ability to understand spoken language*. But since then, the reception disciplines have seen quite a different development during the last century, with listening reception being in the shadow of reading research[8] and, for example, the Reader-Response Theory in the 1970s and 1980s[9].

Without reception there is no listening, no listening process, and no interpersonal communication. Reception theory has a long tradition in mass media audience study and is also vital within aesthetic reception analysis, but unfortunately modern listening research seems to lack a reception theory or a theoretical framework for reception theory (Purdy, 1988). The French philosopher Roland Barthes (1991:43) has pointed out that there is no specific spot for listening in the encyclopaedias of the past, that there is no acknowledged discipline of listening. In fact, according to the Italian philosopher and psychologist Gemma Corradi Fiumara (1990:1) we are in the tradition of Western thought "faced with a system of knowledge that tends to ignore listening processes".

In the Swedish classroom, in the subject of Swedish, there is usually a lot of talk about reception, but it is more or less an understatement that it is solely about the reception of written texts, about reading, and not about listening to oral texts or utterances, live or recorded. Accordingly, I argue that there is a need for the discipline of listening and for a listening reception theory, or a theoretical framework for a reception theory. I consider that Bakhtin (1984; 1999) offers such a theoretical framework for a reception theory, with an extended notion of dialogue, including both oral and written texts, both intrapersonal and interpersonal dialogue. With a Bakhtinian notion of dialogue there is also an obvious parallel and comparison to the discipline of reading and literature reception.

"Listening to voices" (Adelmann, 2002) could metaphorically be described as a wandering between different listening worlds on our way through life. On that road we have to show an openness to each other as listeners, to be able to build genuine human relations (Gadamer, 1979:324). James E. Sullivan (2000:78) has outlined four steps toward what he calls "good listening", and in an adapted Swedish version (Table 1) it looks like this:

Table 1. Listening reception model, or developing listening reception (Adelmann, 2009:108)

1. Being aware about my own listening world
2. Stepping out of my own listening world
3. Entering into somebody else's listening world
4. Sensing somebody else's deepest thoughts and feelings, and enriching my own listening world
5. Returning to my own listening world and giving an adequate response
6. Being aware about my changed listening world

Thinking about listening reception in these terms is close to the German philosopher Hans-Georg Gadamer (1900–2002), when he speaks about the interplay between the known and unknown, and the meeting between two listeners' different horizons of

understanding (1979). It is also close to the approach to reading reception taken by the American professor of education, Judith A. Langer (1995). The differences are primarily about the importance of oral response and awareness, that is, being aware that every single talk in interaction has the potential to change our listening world. Until further listening research has been done, this could be an embryo of a useful and workable listening reception model.

This approach also makes it possible to use analytical listening tools (5) from different disciplines like reading reception, and to connect the listening response (6) to a Listener-Response Theory.

Different listening skills and strategies for different purposes

Many of today's well-known listening standard books were published in the 1980s, like *Listening* (1996 [1982]) by Andrew Wolvin and Carolyn Gwynn Coakley. A major part of that book is about developing purposeful listening skills with a "taxonomy of listening that describes how listeners function at various listening purposes or levels" (1996:151). The Wolvin-Coakley listening taxonomy provides an important framework for dealing with specific skills in, for example, listening education and listening development.

The taxonomy includes five basic purposes for listening in a hierarchy with three levels. The first level includes discrimination, the second comprehension, while at the third level we can listen for a therapeutic, critical or appreciative purpose. The taxonomy is formed graphically "as a tree, with discrimination as the root of the listening hierarchy and comprehension as the trunk, supporting the other [three] listening purposes that shape our behaviors as listeners" (1996:152-153).

There are, of course, many skills of listening reception associated with each of the basic purposes for listening, and for each skill one can employ different listening strategies in order to achieve that purpose or improve that skill. If one listens for a discriminative purpose one can, for instance, use one's skills in phonological awareness, and if one listens for a critical purpose one can improve one's critical listening with, for example, strategies for loaded words.

Table 2. Major notions and listening types (Adelmann, 2009:158)

Notion	Listening type
Attention	Discriminative listening
Sensitiveness	Comprehensive listening
Criticism	Critical listening
Empathy	Empathic listening
Social appreciation	Appreciative listening
Social devotion	Devotional listening

In an adapted Swedish version (Adelmann, 2009), the first three listening types (Table 2) correspond with those of Wolvin and Coakley (1996) but, since the listening type therapeutic listening includes listening with empathy, in an educational and professional perspective I prefer to label that listening type 'empathic listening'. From a Swedish perspective (Crafoord, 2003), one can also divide the social spectra of appreciation into appreciative listening, including gossip and small talk, and devotional listening, including love and fan clubs. This means that the Wolvin-Coakley definition of appreciative listening as listening for "sensory stimulation or enjoyment through the works and experiences of others" (1996:363) is expanded towards a social and dialogical perspective.

These six listening types can be described as three clusters on two levels (Fig. 1). Just like Wolvin and Coakley (1996), there is a basic level but it includes both discrimination and comprehension, forming an understanding basis for the other listening types with attention and sensitiveness. The remaining four listening types gather around the clusters of distance or closeness.

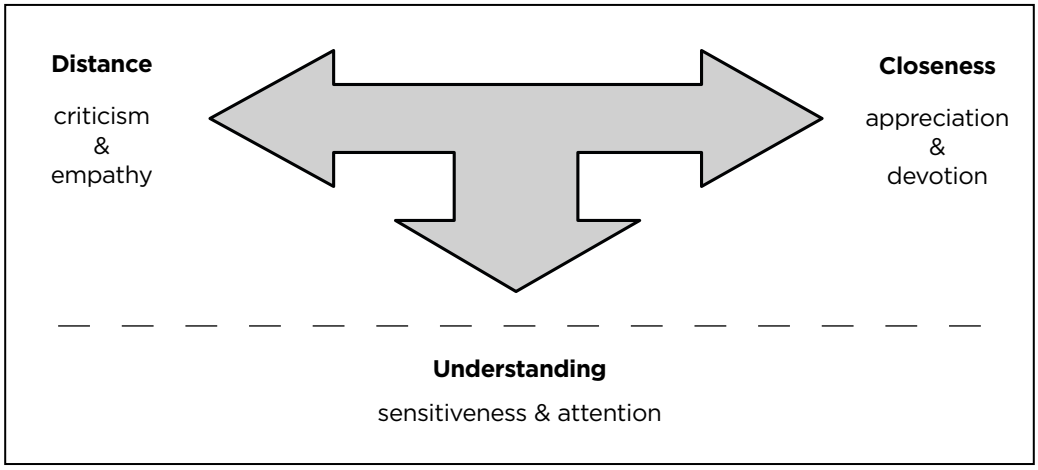

Figure 1. Relation between listening levels and listening types (Adelmann, 2009:173)

On the higher level, and hopefully but not necessarily after understanding, the listener can choose different positions in the listening field from distance to closeness (Fig. 2). However, the different listening types can have a higher or lower degree of distance or closeness. Consequently, criticism seems to have a higher degree of distance than empathy, empathy (in the therapeutic sense) seems to have a higher degree of distance than appreciation and, finally, devotion seems to have a higher degree of closeness than appreciation. This means the listener always has the possibility of taking a position, consciously or unconsciously, positively or negatively, along a continuum between distance and closeness.

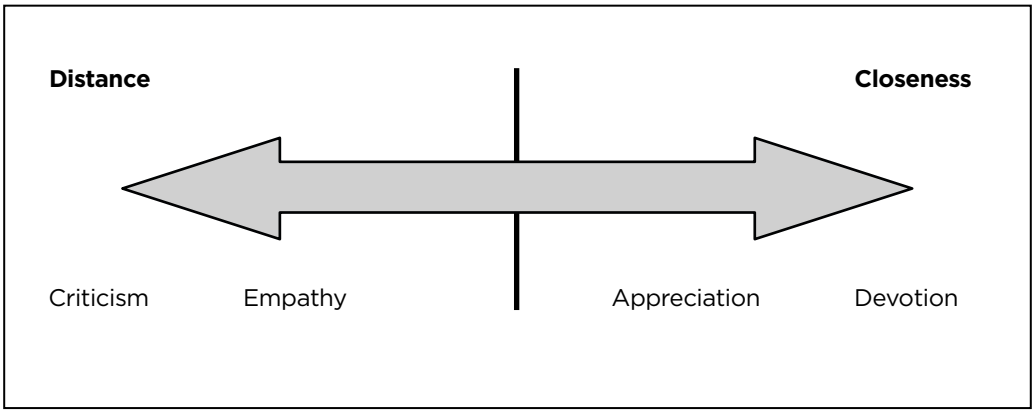

Figure 2. A listening field with listener positions from distance to closeness (Adelmann, 2009:174)

In summary: In the adapted Swedish version (Adelmann, 2009) the taxonomy is reduced to two levels (Fig. 1), has an increased number of listening types with an expanded social and dialogical perspective (Table 2), and can be viewed as a listening field with listener positions from distance to closeness (Fig. 2).

Thus, the Wolvin and Coakley listening taxonomy (1996) provides a framework for listening understanding, or not understanding, while positioning in the listening field. In the Swedish classroom these six listening types can also be used as analytical listening tools (5), which means we have six types of listening responses (6).

Analytical listening tools and methods

In *Voices of the Mind,* professor James V. Wertsch is concerned about the development in the discipline of psychology (1991:4):

> We need to develop the type of theoretical frameworks that can be understood and extended by researchers from a range of what now exist as separate disciplinary perspectives. Furthermore, and perhaps even more important, we need to formulate methodologies that do not automatically exclude the participation of researchers from a variety of disciplines.

In my opinion, this can also be said about the discipline of listening where, as mentioned earlier, there is a need for the participation of researchers from a variety of disciplines in the listening field.

The works in linguistics and literature by the Russian scholar Mikhail M. Bakhtin (1895–1975) have been used by a wide range of researchers from a wide range of perspectives and disciplines. His works seem to include several disciplines and can therefore perhaps serve as an example of a possible theoretical framework within the discipline of listening to. Thus, in *Listening to Voices* (Adelmann, 2002) the works of Bakhtin (1984; 1999) are used as a theoretical framework.

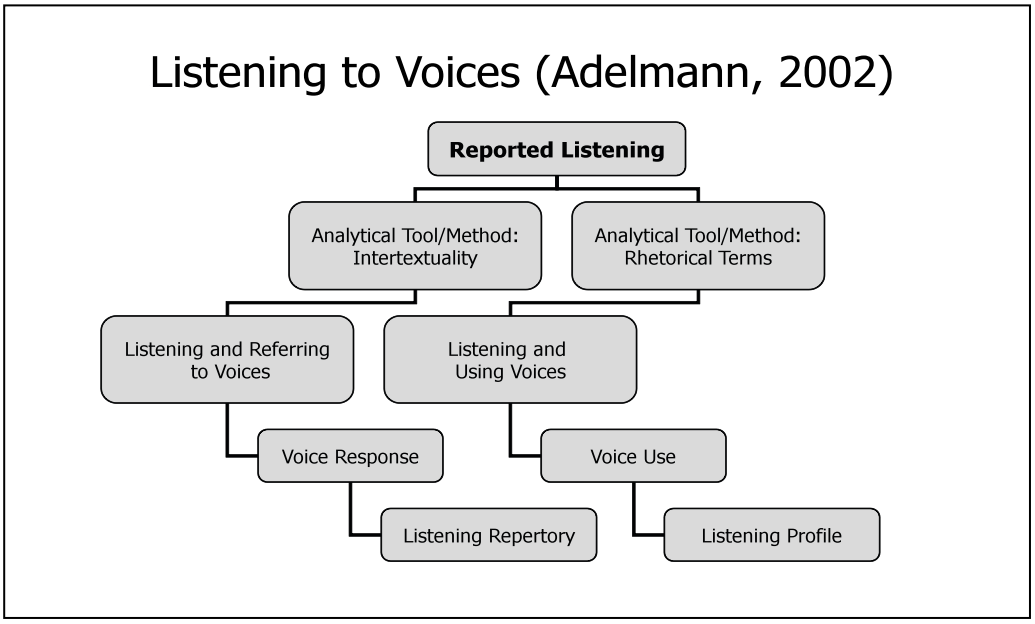

Figure 3. Overview of the structure regarding analytical listening tools in *Listening to Voices* (Adelmann, 2002)

The object of inquiry is the documented part of an earlier reception expressed in an open and explicit response, which I term 'reported listening' (Figure 3). The concept of "inter-textuality" from the discipline of literature is adopted as an analytical listening tool to identify the polyphony of voices in the classroom (Figure 3). I also adopt some rhetorical terms, from the discipline of rhetoric, as analytical listening tools to identify the student's purpose in using different voices (Figure 3). Thus, in the Swedish classroom, and in an educational setting, we need to use analytical listening tools from different disciplines like, for instance, literature and rhetoric, and this is impossible without some kind of wide theoretical framework like the Bakhtinian dialogical and including perspective.

This is a study from a teacher's and not a student's perspective, but as a teacher I am interested in my students' receptivity in listening and have to start with their experience of listening. This means that in my classroom I can track the way the students are using their contextual resources, *which* voices they have actually heard (seen or experienced) and are referring to. This is their voice response (Figure 3)[10]. I can also actually hear *how* they are using those voices, the way they are recontextualising (Linell, 1998) the voices into a dialogical and relational response. This is their voice use (Figure 3)[11].

Founded on many examples of voice response and voice use in different educational settings, the teacher is able to create descriptive patterns of a student's individual listening repertory (Adelmann, 2002:163, supplement 1) and listening profile (Adel-

mann, 2002:224, supplement 2) (Figure 3). These patterns of receptivity, finally, can then be used as a starting point for listening assessment (7), developing the students' listening repertory and listening profile through listening response (6).

Listening response

A dividing line among researchers runs between those who emphasise the intrapersonal process and those who claim that interpersonal activities like behaviour and overt response are an important part of the listening process. Consequently, in some listening models (Wolvin & Coakley, 1996) listening excludes overt listener responses, while in other listening models (Brownell, 1996) listening includes overt listener responses.

Since World War II there seems to be a common view in different disciplines on communication as dialogue (Johannesen, 1971).[12] This dialogue philosophy or approach involves famous names and roots like the Jewish philosopher Martin Buber (1875–1965), the American psychologist Carl R. Rogers (1902–1987) and the Russian philosopher Mikhail M. Bakhtin (1895–1975)[13]:

> "Being heard as such is already a dialogic relation" (Bakhtin, 1999:127).
> "To live means to participate in dialogue: to ask questions, to heed, to respond, to agree, and so forth" (Bakhtin, 1984:293).

The concept of utterance is central to the theory of Bakhtin: "Any utterance is a link in a very complexly organized chain of other utterances" (1999:69). There are no voiceless words, no words that belong to nobody, he argues. Hence our everyday speech is imbued with dialogical relations to other people's words. This means that every utterance is in an interplay with different voices from different contexts in the present talk in interaction. In other words, there are dialogical relations between both people and contexts. Thus, there is no sharp border between text and context.

In every utterance there are "echoes and reverberations of other utterances to which it is related by the communality of the sphere of speech communication. Every utterance must be regarded primarily as a *response* to preceding utterances of the given sphere (we understand the word 'response' here in the broadest sense)" (Bakhtin, 1999:91).

> The fact is that when the listener perceives and understands the meaning (the language meaning) of speech, he simultaneously takes an active, responsive attitude toward it. He either agrees or disagrees with it (completely or partially), augments it, applies it, prepares for its execution, and so on (Bakhtin, 1999:68).

Every utterance has both an author and an addressee, but they are both giving responses. The author gives a response to the preceding utterances and (perhaps) the addressee gives a response to the author. When the addressee is responding the author, the addressee also gives a response to the preceding utterances so the talk in interaction is actually voices and contexts in interaction through people's responses.

We can conclude that, even though Bakhtin never presented an explicit response theory, one may say that in his theory about language as social communication the notion of response is very central.

As a listener I always take a 'responsive attitude', and I always provide a response, no matter if I am participating in a conversation or am silently responding to myself in front of a television or computer. The American researcher Laura A. Janusik (in Wolvin, 2010:205) points out the difference between a listener "placed within the context of a conversation" or involved "in listening in a passive linear context, such as watching television". In the Bakhtinian model it is different but still dialogical. This mean that "the listener … takes an active, responsive attitude toward it [the television]" (Bakhtin, 1999:68), gives a response, overt or silent, now or later, and (perhaps) the response becomes "a link in the chain of speech communion" (Bakhtin, 1999:84).

Another American researcher, James J. Floyd (in Wolvin, 2010:135), discusses problems with different kinds of dialogic listening and points to "the distinction between monologue and dialogue". However, in the Bakhtinian model all language use is dialogical since one's participation is monologic or interactive. This means we are not talking about what dialogue *is* but what it *does* to our communication. According to Bakhtin (1999), a dialogical perspective on utterances does not imply a listening type or a general approach to listening but a constitutive feature of our production of utterances as listeners.

In the Swedish classroom, with this dialogical perspective as a theoretical framework, one can actually *hear* which voices the students have been listening to, are referring to and are using while they are constructing a voice of their own. From a learning perspective, one can say that the polyphony of voices in the classroom is responses that (in some way) reflect different dimensions of contexts in time and space (Adelmann, 2002). I thus suggest there is need for a Listener-Response Theory with an extended notion of dialogue, like Bakhtin's.

As mentioned, different listening skills and strategies for different purposes (4) can be used as analytical listening tools and methods (5). This means that we can hear and assess at least six types of listening responses in the classroom (7).

Listening assessment

In neither Sweden nor Scandinavia is there (to my knowledge) any college or university that has a "practical framework for listening across the curriculum" or anything similar to the team of educators at Alverno College in the USA (Kathleen Thompson et al. in Wolvin, 2010:266). At some colleges and universities in Sweden, especially where there is a strong tradition of rhetoric, listening is more or less visible. Listening usually appears in professions like service industries, health care, journalism, helping professions, organisation leaders and education, but generally as an aspect of talk in interaction with a focus *on* speech, where the listener takes a more active part. Thus, listening is commonly not seen as an acknowledged reception discipline.

At Malmö University, in the Faculty of Education and Society and at the Department of Culture, Language and Media the first official lectures and exercises in listening were held in the introduction course for all students in 2007 and in the subject of Swedish in 2009. In spring 2011, for the very first time a one-day course in rhetoric *and* listening for teachers in the field was held and in autumn 2011, finally, some parts of *The Art of Listening* (Adelmann, 2009) were made compulsory reading for students who are becoming teachers in the subject of Swedish for primary, secondary and upper secondary school. But the notion of 'listening' is never mentioned explicitly in the syllabus for teacher education in the subject of Swedish, and consequently there are no standards for listening and no listening assessment according to the syllabus during the entire education.

At Alverno College listening has been an important part of courses in communication since 1973. But:

> In retrospect, we now realize that we were preparing students for and giving them practice in listening to formal, usually well-prepared podium speeches, and, by default, not acknowledging and working with other types of listening interactions that people have every day in their professional, social, and interpersonal lives (Kathleen Thompson et al. in Wolvin, 2011:267)

I would argue that this situation is very similar to ours in Sweden today. Normally, it is easy to gain some understanding for preparing students for lectures and podium speeches, with 'active' listening, note taking and relevant questions. But it is hard work to convince superiors, colleagues and students that listening reception is essential in day-to-day work during education and with observations and interviews in the field, as well as listening across the curriculum in their professional lives as teachers.

On the other hand, in contrast to the USA in Sweden we have a common national curriculum and a common national syllabus in every subject in the classroom. In 2011 Swedish schools obtained a new curriculum and syllabus in primary school, secondary school and upper secondary school from the Swedish National Agency for Education. In the subject of Swedish in compulsory school, the *core content* comprises five major areas, of which the second for the first time (Adelmann, 2002) is called "Speaking, listening and talking" (Curriculum, Lgr11). The notion of 'listening' is never mentioned explicitly among the *Knowledge requirements*, but it may seem obvious that one needs some listening skills if one is to "receive simple oral instructions" (at the end of year 3), to maintain the dialogue and to adapt to purpose and recipient (at the end of year 6) and, finally, to take "the dialogues and discussions forward" and adapt to purpose as well as recipient and context (at the end of year 9).

Teaching the subject of Swedish at upper secondary school should, among other things, stimulate pupils' personal growth through the four language arts of talking, writing, reading and listening. The subject should aim to support the pupils in developing knowledge in and about nine major areas, of which the first and the third are about speaking, prepared conversation and arguing, rhetoric and adaptability to

purpose, recipient and context (Läroplan, GY 2011). In the *Core content,* the notion of 'listening' is explicitly mentioned once during year 1, namely talking about listening in different ways and adapting to the situated communication, and the rhetoric process is a main point during year 3. The notion of 'listening' is never clearly mentioned among the *Knowledge requirements*, but pupils are supposed to adapt to purpose, recipient and situated communication, have contact with the audience, argue and use the rhetorical tools.

During both compulsory school and upper secondary school the National Agency for Education holds national examinations in subjects like Swedish, English and Mathematics. In the subject of Swedish the examination concerns both oral and written language, even though the test in written language is more important for the final grade. This means that the Swedish teacher in the subject of Swedish has to train, assess and grade the oral skill. But unfortunately we, like the rest of the Western world (Barthes, 1991; Fiumara, 1990), focus on speaking and have a very weak tradition (if any) when it comes to listening. This signifies that the teacher can put a grade on the speech without necessarily assessing the listening competence, neither of the speaker, nor the recipient(s).

Compared to Alverno College (Kathleen Thompson et al. in Wolvin, 2011) and the listening standards recommended by the National Communication Association (*Competent communicators*, 1998), we might still be in the 1970s but compared to the preceding curriculum (Adelmann, 2002) it is actually a step forward. When the *Core content* (Läroplan, GY 2011), for instance, calls for listening in different ways and adapting to the situated communication, the answer might be learning different listening skills and strategies for different purposes (Adelmann, 2009; Wolvin & Coakley, 1996).

Further, the oral part of the national examinations in the subject of Swedish has also taken a step forward (Brännström, 2011) since oral language is now almost as important for the final grade as written language. But listening is still not an acknowledged reception discipline compared to and equal with reading[14], and standards for listening assessment in the national examinations in the subject of Swedish are still missing in the instructions from the National Agency for Education[15].

The existence of a common syllabus in Swedish and national examinations in oral language give us a great opportunity to strengthen and acknowledge listening reception and to move the perspective in oral language from solely talking to including listening reception. This means that we are primarily interested in giving the National Agency for Education examples of standards for listening assessment and supporting the teachers in the field to assess and grade listening competence in speech and conversation (Adelmann, 2009).

The basis for assessing the level of knowledge should be grounded in observable skills, according to the National Agency for Education. In ordinary education and on a daily basis it is therefore possible to save and document the students' listening

experiences in a portfolio as a listening diary (Adelmann, 2012). Just like the above-mentioned patterns of reported listening (5) there will eventually emerge some results or reflections as a starting point for listening development[16].

If we assume that students learn and experience how to read and listen in different ways in school, then we know they have an understanding of that you actually *can* read and listen in different ways. Thus, if you can listen in different ways, like the listening types (Table 2), then it seems reasonable to say that you are also able to respond in different ways, for instance like the corresponding listening responding types. This means that when it comes to listening assessment the examples of different listening skills (4) mentioned earlier make it possible to observe, hear and document six types of listening responses (Table 3), adapted to purpose, context and school year.

The listening teacher will of course be able to hear (and see) if a student makes an effort to understand through attention and sensitiveness (Fig. 1), using for instance adequate feedback, relevant questions, and paraphrasing (Adelmann, 2009). It is also possible for the teacher to hear if a student first tries to understand or immediately jump to conclusions with, for example, a critical statement. When the listener (believes that he/she) understands and chooses, for example, a critical position, the teacher turns the attention to things like the listener's competence in examining if the person is trustworthy, examining the source of information, handling feelings and giving a suitable response (Adelmann, 2009). In this way it is possible to show how the six types of listening responses can be operationalised for the student[17].

Table 3. Listening response types? (Adelmann, 2009:237)

Basis for assessing listening development no. 4		Students name:		Date:
Activity:		Place:		Time:
Assessing the skill to give a listening response in different ways				
Goal	**Achieve the goal**			
The student listen and gives	**insufficiently**	**partly**	**almost**	**completely**
Discriminative response				
Comprehensive response				
Critical response				
Empathic response				
Appreciative response				
Devotional response				
Comment:				

This also corresponds with one of the three listening standards by the National Communication Association (NCA), namely "the ability to use appropriate and effective listening skills for a given communication situation and setting" (*Competent Communicators*, 1998:3)[18].

Conclusion

As the observant reader has noticed, there is no dividing line between the American tradition and my perspective of the Scandinavian context, although there are some important and interesting differences. While mainstream listening research in the USA on the whole seems to be quantitative and psychological with a focus on the individual, the main listening research in Scandinavia is qualitative with a socio-cultural approach and maintains an interest in the individual's dialogic learning in groups with different contextual resources. This also becomes evident when one looks at most issues of *The International Journal of Listening* over the last decade or so, or reads Andrew D. Wolvins' (2010:33) introduction to *Listening and Human Communication in the 21st Century*, where he states that there is a "lack of qualitative listening research"[19].

My works (Adelmann 2002; 2009) are primarily based on American research but they also formulate a qualitative approach and introduce an alternative theoretical framework for listening reception in Swedish as a school subject and as a research field. Further, *The Art of Listening* (Adelmann, 2009), with its extended notion of dialogue, could be read as a critical review of some fundamental domains for international listening research and as an attempt to include and invite the participation of researchers from a variety of disciplines.[20]

Thus, to sum up the seven points of listening reception in the adapted Swedish version:

- The review of some fundamental domains for listening research entails both criticism and self-criticism (1–2, 4, 6 and 7).
- With an educational approach and an alternative theoretical framework it is possible to work with an expanding and including perspective in listening research and listening education (1–7).
- The need for a listening reception theory and a Listener-Response Theory makes it necessary to present a temporary and adapted reception model based on some American and Russian models (3–6).
- The need for strengthening listening reception in the mother tongue, equal to reading and the other language arts, makes it obligatory to present (and practice) some analytical listening tools and to support both the National Agency for Education and teachers in the field with some tools for assessing and grading listening competence and development (4–5 and 7).

From my point of view and in an educational perspective, in this article I have revealed a pragmatic way to adapt and temporarily solve or avoid some of the traditional problems within international listening research in my efforts to present listening as a modern reception discipline in the mother tongue of Swedish.

Thank you for listening!

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Notes

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The 1926 dissertation, from the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor, Michigan, USA, is unpublished, but the abstract is published in *Dissertation Abstracts* 12:847-48, 1952. There are also excerpts and résumés from the dissertation in some published articles: "The Importance of Listening Ability" in *The English Journal College Edition* 1928, 17:623-30; "Listening Ability" in *Proceedings of the Ohio State Educational Conference, Ninth Annual Session*, Ohio State University in Columbus, Ohio, 1929:172-83; and "Listening Ability: Its Importance, Measurement and Development" in *Chicago Schools Journal*, January 1930a, 12:177-79, and June 1930b, 12:417-20.

2 http://www.listen.org/

3 Since 2004 the corresponding subject heading in the Swedish database Svenska ämnesord (SAO) is "lyssnande" http://libris.kb.se.

4 The dissertation passed in the subject of *The theory and practice of teaching and learning Swedish* [Svenska med didaktisk inriktning, SMDI], originally a research subject at the University of Lund (1995) but nowadays (2011) also examined at Malmö University. This means that SMDI is both a research subject and a network of different traditions in the subject of Swedish.

5 Most of this article was presented for a different purpose as a paper at the 32nd Annual International Listening Association (ILA) Convention, 31 March–2 April 2011, in Johnson City, Tennessee, USA.

6 The transfer model of communication originates from information theory where information is stored, processed and transmitted within technical systems, like Shannon and Weaver's signal transmission theory (Linell, 2011:138).

7 This also implies that "understanding the relational dimensions of listening may contribute to understanding intrapersonal communication" (Rhodes, 1989:565).

8 Ralph G. Nichols (1948:154) points out that: "*The encyclopedia? of Educational Research* reports that 1951 scientific studies relating to reading has been published in the United States and England by 1939. In contrast, only fourteen scientific researches related to classroom listening comprehension were found".

9 The Reader-Response Theory is represented by famous names like Fisher (1980), Iser (1978), Langer (1995) and Rosenblatt (1995 [1938]).

10 Right now, in my written voice response, I am referring to Bakhtin, that belongs to my contextual resources.

11 Right now, in my written voice use, you can read how I am using Bakhtin while I am arguing for an expanding and including perspective in listening research and listening education.

12 This dialogical perspective, however, is not mainstream theory, where variants of transfer theory have dominated linguistics and philosophy throughout most of history, "usually combined with some sort of a code theory of language" (Linell, 2011:135).

13 This also means that many of the dialogic approaches to language (like Gadamer, Mead, Vygotsky, Bakhtin and Goffman) do not originate from mainstream linguistics (Linell, 2011:194).

14 It is interesting to notice, for example, that in both the national syllabus for compulsory school in the subject of Swedish and in the supporting material from the National Agency for Education there is an emphasis on reading strategies, while specific listening strategies are never mentioned.

15 The listening perspective (including references to Adelmann 2002 & 2009) are represented in a supporting and test material from the National Agency for Education, called *Språket på väg* I and II (2011), for compulsory school in the subjects of Swedish and Swedish as a second language, grades 6–9. http://www.skolverket.se/prov-och-bedomning/ovrigt-bedomningsstod/2.6011/2.1195/svenska-och-svenska-som-andrasprak-1.106467

16 For examples of reported listening, with the individual student's listening repertory and listening profile, I refer to my dissertation (Adelmann, 2002).

17 For other examples of how to operationalise the six types of listening I refer to my textbook (Adelmann, 2009).

18 According to the NCA, competent listeners also demonstrate: knowledge and understanding of the listening process, and the ability to identify and manage barriers to listening.

19 It is interesting to notice that Chapter 2 about qualitative research comprises about 12 pages, while the following chapter about quantitative research encompasses 40 pages.

20 It seems appropriate to add that my paper was warmly received at a public session at the 32nd Annual International Listening Association Convention, in Johnson City, Tennessee, USA, 1 April 2011.

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