

# [Spoken language versus written language](https://assignbuster.com/spoken-language-versus-written-language/)

### Spoken vs. written language

Not so long time ago, the written language played much bigger role in second language learners’ life than the spoken language. According to Brown (2000) “ Today the importance of teaching the spoken language is universally acknowledged” (p. 1). For example, many scientists state that people should learn speaking and listening, as well as writting and reading; furthermore, learners should spend more energy on listening. Thus generally one can claim it is more difficult to learn how to understand the spoken language than the written.

First of all, during listening, learners cannot focus on one section as they would do in a reading task. Listeners do not have opportunity to read back, if they misunderstand an expression or forget the beginning of the text. Furthermore, according to Ridgway (2000) they do not have the possibility for “ looking a word up in the dictionary, or guessing the meaning of a word from its context” (p. 3.), like they do it in a reading exercise.

Secondly, during listening learners depend on the style of the text and on the listening environment more than in the case of reading. As Field (2000) points out, “ a listener, who has difficulties in identifying words in connected speech”(p. 2.), can also have problems with different dialects, and the style and the speed of the text he or she listens to, because native speakers “ speak only clearly enough to make themselves understood in a particular context” (Brown, 1990, p. 2.). Furthermore, listeners can be confused by the noisy, annoying environment, for example, during a conversation on the street or a crowded restaurant, while these conditions do not appear in a written text.

Thirdly, during a listening exercise, the motivation of learners is always lower, because these kinds of tasks scare listeners, adding, that in reading they are braver, because of the advantages which are mentioned at the second paragraph. So to become a good listener, the most important aim is to find the “ faith in one’s ability to apply” a listening readiness (Field, 2000, p. 1.), because after this momentous step, a text will not cause so much fear. Furthermore, listeners should be able to determine the complexity of the given tasks, because then they can choose the appropriate level for themselves, so they will probably not fail and their self-confidence will improve. However, according to Ridgway (2000), “ grading texts is problematic” (p. 3.), so it can be another serious controversy.

Finally, practising listening is more difficult than reading. For instance, it is not easy to learn listening skills, because as Brown (1990) says, “ the students are not receiving any help in learning” (p. 3.) , but they have to realise alone how to set up the process of listening and improve their facilities. Moreover, learners’ abilities to listening are not similar to everyone, so the ways of practice should be different from each other. For example, even in a class, which is few in number, the teacher should prove at least four different ways of learning listening, but unfortunatelly it is not possible. It follows that learners have to find the best way independently.

In conclusion, learning and listening to the spoken language is more difficult, than learning the written language, because listeners cannot focus on one section; they are dependent on the style of the speech and the listening environment; they are threatened, if they get a task at higher level; and they need different ways to practise and more help from teachers.

### References:

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