

Listening for Conversational Patterns

Created by India Plough for ELI 333: Interactive Communication

Listening Excerpts: Academic Advising Session*
Length of meeting: 15 minutes
Length of excerpts: [First 1:24](#) and [last 1:37 min](#) of session
Participants: LSA Freshman (S2) and Advisor (S1)

Listening #1:

Listen for the components of the conversational pattern. Try picking out the stressed words, which will provide you with indicators of the different components.

- Does the session include small talk? If so, what is it about?
- Who initiates it?
- What is the response to the small talk? That is, is it a simple “yes” or “no?”
- Which areas of study are discussed first?
- In very general terms, what does the student say about these fields of study?
- Which areas of study are discussed next?
- In very general terms, what are the student and advisor discussing?
- Is the closing a simple “good-bye?” What else is included?

Listening #2:

- What makes each participant an active listener?
- Roughly, how many backchannel cues does each speaker provide? You don’t need to give an exact count!
- When are they inserted--both in terms of content and pauses in speech?
- Can you attribute any meaning to the backchannel cues? In other words, why are they used?

Listening #3:

Listen for details!

Style:

- Which speaker seems to use more contractions?
- Whose rate of speech is faster?
- Whose speech contains more false starts and/or repairs?

So....whose language would you characterize as more formal? Why?

Content:

Why has the student changed her mind about prebusiness and economics?

Which classes does a student have to have in order to take paleontology?

Do all astronomy classes have labs?

Where are there telescopes located on campus?

*R. C. Simpson, S. L. Briggs, J. Ovens, and J. M. Swales. (2002) The Michigan Corpus of Academic Spoken English. Ann Arbor, MI: The Regents of the University of Michigan. (ADV700JU023)