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KEY TERMS

Intelligibility

"the extent to which a speaker's message is actually understood by a listener" (p. 2)

Comprehensibility

"the listener's perceived ability to understand the meaning of the word or utterance in its given context" (p. 2)

WHAT EVIDENCE IS SUMMARISED?

18 studies

HOW CAN I USE THE FINDINGS IN MY TEACHING?

- Teachers can encourage native English speakers to interact more with English language learners to identify and become more familiar with foreign accents.
- Teachers can attend to pronunciation issues that affect comprehension.

WHAT CAN I LEARN FROM THIS SECONDARY RESEARCH?

How native English speakers comprehend English language learners' speech?

WHAT DOES IT FIND?

- Foreign accents may make native English speakers believe they cannot understand English language learners' utterances.
- Native English speakers are often reluctant to understand English language learners' speech.
- Oral presentations and picture descriptions (spontaneous tasks) provide more contextual clues that can make utterances easier to be understood by listeners.
- Successful communication is a jointly constructed activity which requires both the speaker and the listener to communicate with and understand each other.

