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This book is for learners of Korean, as a heritage or foreign language, at the elementary level. Listening can be difficult, particularly for foreign language learners at the beginning level. However, it is vital to devote much time to listening, and to gain exposure to a variety of listening materials. The purpose of this book is to provide learners with listening practice materials and to help learners reduce their fear or anxiety of foreign language listening and develop confidence in their listening ability.

There is a story the author never forgets and shares with her students:

At the restaurant:

Waiter: Ma'am, would you like to have "[supersalad]?"

Foreign customer: Yes!

Waiter: Do you want "[supersalad]?"

Foreign customer: Yes, please!

Waiter: Soup-or-salad?

Foreign customer: Oh, salad please... (She felt her cheeks flush red.)

This book strives to provide extra practice opportunities for learners to further develop their skills in several areas, including discriminating between sounds, making successful sound-letter connections, discovering word and phrase boundaries, and understanding how the target language speakers blend sounds together in speaking. This book also aims to provide opportunities to help learners utilize various contextual clues to identify the meaning of new words and expressions introduced in the text.

Learners, in particular those in the early stages of language learning, have great difficulty in handling both form and content. This listening practice book introduces everyday conversations that contain colloquial words, expressions, and grammatical idiosyncrasies. This book also focuses on cultural skill-building, because the ultimate goal of listening practices is to understand natural speech in real-life situations. Korean language learners, who have mainly been exposed to formal, idealized, artificial, and bookish Korean may not have received exposure to such expressions, especially in elementary-level language classrooms and textbooks. In addition, the lack of sociocultural and contextual knowledge of the target language can cause a hindrance to comprehension, because language is unique to each culture.

"Focused listening" is a strategy to listen intently to a text, and it requires learners to make a conscious effort to hear and comprehend what is being said. This book seeks to help learners develop effective focused listening strategies:

**Top-down listening skills:**

- First, listen to the dialogues or texts multiple times as a whole.
- Focus on overall meaning first; identify key points and main ideas, and then move on to the details.
- Take your time, rather than trying to capture every single thing in the text the first time.

**Bottom-up listening skills:**

- Pay attention to the segments of the texts in terms of vocabulary and forms.
- Try to get a more detailed grasp of certain segments of the text.
- Write down specific segments in the text.
- Guess the meaning of a word, phrase, or expression in a particular context.
- Identify specific forms, such as grammatical structures, which can foster comprehension in the text.

**Phonological and phonemic awareness, and phonetic skills:**

- Recognize rapidly spoken colloquial collocations and emulate native speakers' pronunciation and speech patterns.
- Gain awareness of different native speaker accents, intonations, and speech styles.

The listening exercises in this book can be done either as class activities or through self-study. Here, the advantage of working on listening exercises independently is that it enables each learner to work at an individual pace and repeat areas as needed to comprehend and complete the exercises.

**Open Your Ears Wide!**

