

INDUS UNIVERSITY- ISHLS (Institute of science Humanities and liberal studies)

Name of Department: Department of English

Subject: B.Tech CE/CSE/IT- Technical Communication

Course code: EN0111

Semester: I

Unit 1: Listening Skills

What is Listening?

Listening is a process of receiving, interpreting, and reacting to a message received from the speaker.

The Types of Listening:

1. Appreciative listening:

Appreciative listening is listening for deriving aesthetic pleasure, as we do when we listen to a comedian, musician, or entertainer.

2. Empathetic listening:

When we listen to a upset friend who wants to expel his feelings, we provide emotional and moral support in the form of empathetic listening. For example, when psychiatrists listen to their patients, their listening is classified as empathetic listening.

3. Comprehensive listening:

This type of listening is needed in the classroom when students have to listen to the lecturer to understand and comprehend the message. Similarly, when someone is giving you directions to find the location of a place, comprehensive listening is required to receive and interpret the message.

4. Critical listening:

When the purpose is to accept or reject the message or to evaluate it critically, one requires this type of listening. For example, listening to a sales person before

making a purchase. Similarly, when you read a book with the objective of writing a book review, you use your critical abilities.

All though all these types of listening are important, we mainly involve ourselves in comprehensive and critical listening. Even as students, you are primarily involved in these two types of listening during classroom lectures or communicating at work.

Active and Passive listening:

Active Listening: Active listening is a way of listening and responding to another person, improving the mutual understanding between the two. It is the method of listening used in counselling and solving conflicts and disputes. Active listening involves listening and reacting, which indicates that you understood what was said. In this, reaction mostly involves non-verbal cues, such as nodding, making eye contact, and facial expressions. Note that these non-verbal cues happen naturally; if you concentrate on intentionally making non-verbal cues, you are not probably listening well.

Passive Listening: Passive listening is basically hearing something without responding to it. When you are listening passively, you'll sit quietly without giving any response or reaction. For example, listening to music, watching the news, listening to a lecture, etc. In passive listening, there is a tendency of our mind moving to other topics from time to time; although you think that you are listening to something, you are not actually understanding what is being said. Therefore, passive listening is one-way communication.

Basis for Comparison	Active Listening	Passive Listening
Meaning	Active Listening is a process of transforming the thought or statement into a clear message, with full-fledged involvement from the listener's side.	Passive Listening is a process of simply consuming the message, however, there is no involvement from the listener's side
Process	Interactive	Mechanical

Role of Listener	Listener stimulates the speaker to speak up his ideas willingly, by displaying his/her interest, in the conversation	Listener dispirits the speaker by showing boredom and disinterest, on his face
Involves	Reacting while listening	Listening without reacting
Communication	Two-way Communication	One-way Communication
Feedback and Questions	Present	Not Present
Listener	Concentrates understands, responds and remembers the statement spoken by the speaker	Thinks about other topics, while showing that he/she is listening
Non-verbal clues shown by the listeners	Change in facial expression, Rolling of eyes, showing interest by questioning or smiling, etc	Yawning, looking here and there, showing boredom, being silent etc.

Barriers of Listening:

1. Physical Barriers:

Physical barriers to listening could be noise and physical discomfort or any physical factor.

2. Psychological Barriers:

Any psychological or emotional disturbance can prove to be a barrier to effective listening because it leads to lack of interest and concentration.

3. Linguistic Barriers:

If one listens to something in a language or dialect that he is not able to follow, communication will break down.

4. Cultural Barrier:

If the speaker and listener belong to different cultures and share different values, Listening and comprehension could become a difficult process.

Difference between Listening and Hearing:

Listening: Listening is purposeful and focused rather than accidental. As a result, it requires motivation and effort. Listening, at its best, is active, focused, concentrated attention for the purpose of understanding the meanings expressed by a speaker. We do not always listen at our best, however, and later in this chapter we will examine some of the reasons why and some strategies for becoming more active critical listeners.

Hearing: It is an accidental and automatic brain response to sound that requires no effort. We are surrounded by sounds most of the time. For example, we are accustomed to the sounds of airplanes, lawn mowers, furnace blowers, the rattling of pots and pans, and so on. We hear those incidental sounds and, unless we have a reason to do otherwise, we train ourselves to ignore them. We learn to filter out sounds that mean little to us, just as we choose to hear our ringing cell phones and other sounds that are more important to us.

HEARING	LISTENING
Hearing is the act of perceiving sound and receiving sound waves or vibrations through your ear.	Listening is the act of hearing a sound and understanding what you hear.
Hearing is one of the five senses and it just happens all the time – whether you like it or not – unless you have a hearing problem	Listening Requires concentration so that your brain processes meaning from words and sentences.
Hearing simply happens.	Listening leads to learning.
Hearing is a skill where you use your ears only . It is one of the five senses.	Listening uses different senses , like the sense of hearing, seeing, or sense of touch.

Hearing is an involuntary act where you simply receive vibrations through your ears.	Listening is a skill that lets the sound you hear go through your brain to process the meaning of it.
Physiological	Psychological
Subconscious level	Conscious level
Concentration is not required	Concentration is required

How to overcome Listening Barriers:

1. Minimize distractions

To avoid getting distracted, make sure you are physically facing the speaker and attempt to make frequent eye contact with them while they are speaking. Make sure you are seated or standing comfortably but appropriately so you can remain engaged. Put away your cell phone or any other pieces of technology that could become a distraction. The speaker may also appreciate the gesture you've made to show them that they have your undivided attention.

2. Prioritize listening over speaking

If you think you might be an excessive talker, try to practice self-control in conversation. Give the other person room to speak. During any conversation with a coworker, wait until they're finished speaking before you respond to show respect for what they're saying. Finally, observe your listeners' reactions as you talk. If you notice signs of distraction in someone you are speaking with, consider asking questions to encourage them to talk more and direct their focus back on the conversation.

3. Reduce outside noise

Before having a conversation, minimize sound in your environment that could be distracting or make it more challenging to hear. A noisy

environment can create distractions for both listeners and speakers, resulting in possible disruptions to conversations.

To minimize noise, turn off mobile devices or place them on silent. Plan to hold important conversations in a place that you know will be quiet, like your office or a private meeting area. If someone is talking loudly outside your office or making other distracting noises, it is often better to politely ask them to move elsewhere or keep the noise down.

4. Ask questions

In addition to reflecting, asking questions is an effective listening technique. Focus on asking questions based on what the speaker has already told you and are designed to elicit more information. The best questions are nonjudgmental and flow directly from something the speaker has recently said.

5. Look for opportunities to practice listening

Because conversation is integral to everyday life in addition to the workplace, you should have plenty of opportunities to hone this soft skill. While you are conversing with someone, plan to use an effective listening response, such as asking questions.

6. Reflect on your conversations: After a conversation, take some time to think about whether you were listening effectively and what kinds of barriers may have occurred. Then, you can think about how you might handle such obstacles in the future.

7. Focus your conversations on the other person: To help prevent listening barriers before they arise, approach conversations with the mindset that you genuinely want to learn more about the other person while they talk. This can naturally help you get rid of distractions and focus only on the conversation you're having.