

Chapter 2

LISTENING SKILLS

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Objectives of the Chapter

The aim of this study is to critically analyse listening skills as aspects of grammatical acquisition in language learning especially in the second language learning (L2) situation. The study accentuates the skills required for effective listening by learners. It examines how best a learner can comprehend aspects of grammar through the use of appropriate listening skills. The study adopts the Speech Act theory model of J. L. Austin (1962) as its methodology for the analysis carried out. The specific objectives of this study are therefore:

1. Investigating communicative competence through the application of appropriate listening methods.
2. Establishing the robust context of listening via the use of the correct listening strategies.
3. Enhancing listening practices for better reproductive social interaction.
4. Showcasing the listening skills as developed new semiotic communication resources in digital and non digital environments.

Resources

The resources of this research include the following outlines:

1. Meaning, nature and characteristics of Listening
2. Types and levels of Listening
3. Purpose and Role of Listening in verbal communication
4. Listening problems
5. Listening in the ESL (English as Second Language in Classroom Situation)

For the above sub parts, stories were told in practical listening situations and observations were made about the appropriate listening skills and the problems and barriers to effective listening are earmarked for the discussions herein

Introduction

People generally assume that any person can listen effectively to any oral discourse. They believe that we do not have to learn listening skills. That since we have ears and can hear sounds and utterances, we listen automatically. Listening is taken for granted mainly because people fail to differentiate between the two concepts of hearing and listening. They also forget the fact that listening requires more than the hearing of speech sounds. Hearing does not require much effort since the auditory organs are kept open for the sound waves to pass through. Hearing is the mere process by which sound waves are received and relayed along the nervous system of the ear. Listening on the other hand, is the process of directing attention to the sound contrasts and their sequences. Beyond the sounds, it is the ability to differentiate between the meaning of the words and deduce appropriate meanings for sentences. Hence, people say: "I

hear you but cannot understand what you are saying". Hearing is, therefore, different from listening, which requires paying attention to what is being said for comprehension purpose.

For listening to have taken place, both the listener and the speaker, known as the interlocutors in any interaction, must understand each other. This means that the end result of listening is effective communication. A further affirmation of this is given by Rost (1990,p.2) in his assertion below:

To make words serviceable to the end of communication, it is necessary that they excite, in the hearer, exactly the same idea they stand for in the mind of the speaker. Without this, people fill one another's 'heads' with noise and sound, but convey not their thoughts, and lay not before one another their ideas, which is the end of discourse and language. The role of the receiver is to re-construct the speaker's message as encoded in the signal below.

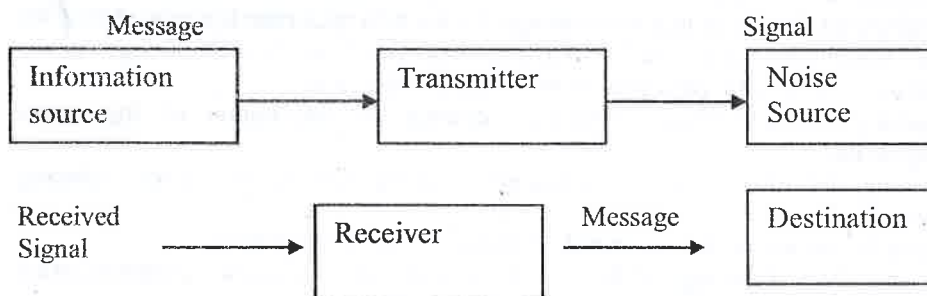


Fig. 1 Listening Communication Process (Adapted from Rost 1990, p.2)

From Rost's illustration above, communication can be perceived as the sending and receiving of information. Communication becomes an incomplete grammatical aim, once it remains one-sided, e.g. communication cases where responses are not received. Certain factors could hinder effective listening and subsequently effective communication. The most common of these factors is one's inability to sort out sounds, words that are meaningful but are quite different in certain shades, flavours and colours of usage. In addition, certain situational and performance factors also impede efficient listening. These include physical factors such as background noise, distance or unclear sound production (if on loudspeakers), imperfectly planned speech, false starts, hesitation, speaker's variance in tempo of speech, clarity of articulation, regional accents, etc.

Hence, the listener is faced with the task of combining both linguistic and non-linguistic sources e.g. dividing the stream of sound into their meaningful units and merging these with the speaker's individual signals. The listener in this case, locates, reconstructs sequences, decodes meaning and considers other linguistic features such as loudness, pitch, length, frequency which are apparent characteristics of most oral discourse.

Active Listening Versus Passive Listening

Listening is not the same as hearing

Listening is the ability to accurately receive and interpret messages in the communication process. It is key to all effective communication. Without the ability to listen effectively, messages are easily misunderstood. As a result of ineffective listening, communication breaks down and the sender of the message can easily become frustrated or irritated. Effective listening requires concentration and use of our senses, not mere hearing of the words spoken. Therefore, if there is any communication skill you should aim at mastering, it

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the listening skill. Studies have shown that, whereas speaking raises blood pressure, attentive listening brings high blood pressure down. The way to connect a fellow human being is by listening, i.e. giving our attention to him or her; the speaker. And it has been observed that we spend 45% of our time for listening. Speaking = 30%, Reading 16% and 9% for writing (Adler, *et al.*, 2001). Hearing refers to the sounds that enter your ears. It is a physical process that, if you do not have any hearing problems, happens automatically. Listening however, requires more than that. It requires focus and concentrated mental and physical efforts. Listening is paying attention not only to what is said but how what is said is being said. One's ability to listen actively depends on the degree of one's perception and comprehension of what is being said. This means that listening is not a passive process but an active process of communication participation

Principles of Effective Listening

A good listener should listen not only to what is being said, but also to what is left unsaid or only partially said. Based on good listening therefore, he/she can make inferences. Effective listening involves the observation of the speaker's body language and taking note of inconsistencies in the verbal and non-verbal message, plus what is being said. This means that when we listen, we do not only use our ears, but also our eyes sensibilities. For examples, if someone tells you that he is not happy with his life but is laughing wholeheartedly, you should be able from your listening ability to know that the verbal and non-verbal messages are in conflict. May be he does not mean what he said as he is being sarcastic about his unhappy life.

Things to do to enhance your listening ability include the following:

1. **Stop talking**
Don't talk while you listen. Each of these sensory parts cannot all work well at the same time
2. **Prepare Yourself to Listen by Relaxing**
Focus on the speaker. Put other things out of mind. The human mind is easily distracted by other thoughts such as what are we going to eat for lunch? it is going to rain? Try to put other thoughts out of mind and concentrate on the messages, that are being communicated to you.
3. **Put the Speaker at Ease**
Help the speaker to feel free to speak
Remember their needs and concerns. Nod or use other gestures or words to encourage the speaker to continue. They help to let the speaker know that you are following what he/she is saying. Maintain eye contact but don't stand as if your mind is far away.
4. **Ignore Distractions**
Don't move legs or shuffle papers or look out of the window or pick your fingernails e.t.c. Avoid unnecessary interruption. These behaviours disrupt the listening process and make the speaker feel that you are tired of listening to him or her.
5. **Empathise: Try to understand the other person's point of view**
Look at issues from their perspectives. By having an open mind, we can fully empathise with the speaker. If the speaker says something that you disagree with, then wait and construct an argument to counter what is said but keep an open mind to the opinions of the speaker.
6. **Be patient**
A pause, even a long pause, does not necessarily mean that the speaker has finished.

Be patient and let the speaker continue in his/her own time because sometimes it takes time to formulate what to say and how to say it. Never interrupt or finish a sentence for someone. Allow him to deliver his full thinking by himself/herself.

7. Avoid Personal Prejudice: Try to be impartial

Don't become irritated and don't let the person's habits or mannerisms distract you from what the speaker is really saying. Everybody has a different way of speaking-some people are for example more nervous or shy than others, some have regional accents or make excessive arm movement, some people like to pace while talking. Others like to be fluent. Ignore delivery style but hijack the content of the speech.

8. Listen to the tone, pitch and volume for emphasized parts

Volume in pitch and tone add to what someone is saying.

A good speaker will use both volume and tone to their advantage to keep an audience attentive; everybody will use pitch, tone and volume of voice in certain situations. Let these help you to understand the emphasised part of what is being said.

9. Listen for Ideas-Not just Words

You need to get the whole picture, not just isolated bits and pieces. Link together the bits and pieces of information to reveal the idea in the speech

10. Watch out for the Non-Verbal Communication Aspects

Gestures, facial expressions, and eye-movements are all important, for additional information transmitted via non-verbal communication.

<https://www.skillsyouneed.com/ips/listening-principles.html>

Barriers to Effective Listening

It is common, when listening to someone else speak, to be formulating a reply while the other person is still talking. However, this means that we are not really listening to all that is being said.

Even good listeners are often guilty of critically evaluating what is being said before fully understanding the message that the speaker is trying to communicate. The result is that assumptions are made and conclusions reached about the speaker's meaning, that might be inaccurate. This and other types of ineffective listening lead to misunderstanding and a breakdown in communication.

Even if we are not formulating a response while listening, we may still be thinking of other things, albeit subconsciously. During a conversation, how often have thoughts such as "What am I going to have for my dinner", "Will I have time to finish that report?" or "I hope I am not late picking the kids up" crossed your mind? At such times, we are distracted and not giving our full attention to what is being said. In other words, we are not actively listening to the speaker.

We can easily pick up bad habits when it comes to listening. Hence, this write-up examines the barriers and bad habits of listening, thereby enabling you to address and correct them. Listening is a key to interpersonal skills and a prerequisite of many of other communication skills. By learning to listen more effectively, you can improve the quality of your professional and personal life.

There are many things that get on the way of listening and you should be aware of these barriers, many of which are bad habits, in order to become a more effective listener. Barriers and bad habits to effective listening can include:

- Listening to more than one conversation at a time. This includes having the television or radio on, while attempting to listen to somebody talk; being on the phone to one person

and talking to another person in the same room and also being distracted by some dominant noise in the immediate environment.

- You find the communicator attractive/unattractive and you pay more attention to how you feel about the communicator and the physical appearance of what they are saying. Perhaps you simply don't like the speaker, you may mentally argue with the speaker and be fast to criticize, either verbally or in your psyche.
- You are not interested in the topic/issue being discussed and become bored.

Meaning, Nature and Characteristics of Listening

Listening is one of the four communicative skills of language, used most often in our daily lives than the other three skills of speaking, reading and writing. This fact makes it the most basic out of the four language skills. Listening involves paying attention to utterances and the ability to identify and understand what someone else has said. Listening is, therefore, also considered as the primary skill in learning a language. It is a skill that can affect the other skills of language if not properly known. For instance, a bad listener is equally likely to be a bad speaker and a good listener will definitely be a good speaker. Poor listening skills will affect efficient speaking, reading and writing. This is because we often speak, read and write in response to either a speech, instruction given by another person or required by a situation all of which we must have understood through listening.

For this reason, Lubega's definition of listening is quite applicable here. He asserts that: Listening involves the ability to select, make sense of and interpret a wide variety of acoustic signals i.e. understanding a speaker's grammar, vocabulary and their meaning (Lubega 1987, p.10)

To Lubega, listening entails not only the perception of sounds but also the ability to understand and evaluate what we perceive, and equally respond or react accordingly. It is a process that requires cultivated habit. Adetugbo (1997, p.8) specifically makes the following list of the listening process.

- (i) Predicting what the talk is about.
- (ii) Guessing the contextual meaning of unfamiliar words and phrases.
- (iii) Identifying and retaining relevant points.
- (iv) Recognizing discourse markers and cohesive devices.
- (v) Understanding the speaker's inferred meaning and attitude to what he is saying.
- (vi) Separating facts from opinions, and
- (vii) Understanding the speaker's pattern of thinking and presentation.

As a result of the fact that the learner is at the receiving end, listening is perceived as a 'receptive' skill. Often people call it the 'passive' skill as well. However, the listening skill should not be considered as a passive skill because the listener is involved in intense auditory activities rather than inactive hearing process while listening. The sounds and sequences of the utterance, which he/she hears, have to be processed for meaning. For instance, the word "Yes" in a complete context word mean total agreement and this carries a falling intonation, and "Yes" with a rising intonation will indicate a question, not total agreement, a request, a demand for an explanation or so. Hence, certain words have the same spellings but different stresses and information patterns and this makes listening efficiency difficult. You may demand for a "cup" and be served with "cap" for example.

Types and Levels of Listening

Tanka and Most (1985, p.17) identify the following listening types. According to them, listening involves the following functional types which can also be technically and hierarchically placed at different levels of use:

1. Attitudinal Listening

This type of listening dwells on the purpose for listening. The listener must be able to develop positive attitude toward the subject matter of the speech. He advances by deriving meaning from this subject matter and indicating this through nods, smiles and various facial expressions. He/she must be able to also use similar gestures and other expression used by the speaker to follow the speech event. This implies paying conscious attention to conversation and discussion between two or more friends or related people. All that is required in this type of listening is a concentration on the speaker's utterances as it relates to his emotional expression.

2. Appreciative Listening

Appreciative listening goes beyond getting general information from a speech. The listener here goes ahead to infer the mood of the speaker and see how the speaker makes his words have effect on his intended meaning i.e, consider listening to certain words and their sequences e.g. wicked, innocent, portrait will suggest the tone, imagery, rhyme, mood and rhythm used. Words make certain impact on the listener. Listening here is based on the intention to make a cooperative reproduction of what is heard. The listener at this level listens to associate ideas and other stimuli, during the listening process and therefore can reproduce them after listening.

3. Analytical/Critical Listening

This involves listening to explicitly stated points and using the point and their contents to arrive at other points in other discourse situations. This type of listening therefore, requires that you 'weigh' what you hear and arrive at decision based on your analytical or critical judgement; your evaluation of what you have heard. Consider what you hear from most advertisements, for instance, and you will conclude that most are empty propaganda, e.g, people buy only 'honeywell' spaghetti.

The words 'honeywell' can be questioned. What does 'honeywell' mean? Why do people buy only 'honeywell'? Does the word 'people' represent everybody? Another example is the following advertisement which we also listen to: "Wise people bank with UBA" This advert can also involve listening for speech habit, making use of aural environmental clues, selecting sounds and finding the combined meanings of these sounds. Here, the listener listens critically to a collection of signals, forms the impressions, makes meaning only of why a fool can't also bank with UBA if he/she also has money. By the time you attempt answering these questions, you are making your listening analytical or critical. Critical inquiry in listening, in essence involves listening for speech habits, making use of aural environmental clues, selecting sounds and finding the combined meanings of these sounds. Here, the listener listens critically to a collection of signals, form the impressions, make meaning only of what is heard and also gives his objective view on what he has heard. The aim here is entirely to criticize. In addition to this, analytical listening allows the listener to reach a conclusion beforehand. For instance, if the speaker says his child fell into a deep river, the listener can conclude that the child got wet, drowned or saved. These are possible results of falling into a river. The results are not only analytical but critical.

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Purpose and Role of Listening in Verbal Communication

People listen to variety of speech events for different purposes. This pronounces the major role of listening as a skill that aids comprehension of communication. The purpose and other functions of listening as enumerated by Jones, Jordan and Mathew (1979:21) are as follows:

(1) Listening for information Processing

Informational Listening is aimed at deriving information from the instruction given about things. If we visualize students listening to lectures, and writing down essential points for instance, listening emphasis will be on the main ideas, the cause of a problem and possible solutions accentuated by the lecturer on the lecture topic. Teacher's instruction, announcements, town criers' message, sermon by Imams or preachers all belong to this listening category. At a glance and in summary, listening for information processing involves the following:

- (i) Identifying the main ideas
- (ii) Identifying the supporting details
- (iii) Knowing the actual words that link the main and the subordinate details
- (iv) Recognising stated cause and effect relationships.
- (v) Tracing the sequences of events, action, narrations, activities, etc.
- (vi) Recognizing the speaker's purpose
- (vii) Marking generalizations
- (viii) Detecting the subject matter
- (ix) Deducing the tone and mood of the speaker
- (x) Drawing conclusions.

In finding the main ideas or points, the listener should know that speaker organize their speech into though units. These units are developed into topic sentences. It is the topic sentences that provides the main points of the units of speech. Example for instance, the main point of the following:

Leaves are very useful to man. Many of them are used as food, for example cabbage, lettuce and vegetables. Some are used as beverages, e.g. tea. There are certain leaves used for roofing huts e.g. oil palm leaves. They can also be useful for making drugs, keeping foods and making ropes. Adapted from Komolafe (1973, p.16).

The main point of this extract is given in the opening sentences which is the topic sentences i.e., "leaves are very useful to man". The sentences provide an overall organizing focus for the remaining sentences. Other statements provide supporting details about the uses of leaves. It reveals the subject matter, the leaves. The purpose of the lecture is to classify the use of leaves into nutritional, medicinal and domestic uses. The mood and tone are exciting ones. The listener must be able to realize that the speech moves from general statements to specific ones, before reaching a conclusion. A further example is in the definition of the word 'engineering'. We may define engineering as the process of harnessing or directing the forces and materials of nature for the use of convenience of man. such as definition is by no means complete and exhaustive, but it is a good working definition because it emphasizes three major points that are central to an understanding of what engineering is, first, the word 'process' suggests a continuing activity. Engineering is not a single specific action but a combination or sequence of actions. It is both an art and a science-a science because it requires specific knowledge, understanding and use of the laws of nature, and an art because it also requires the human talents of imagination, insight judgement, and elasticity of thinking.

Secondly, the words 'harnessing' and 'directing' suggest the how-to-do-it function of engineering. Engineering involves the changing and molding of materials and forces rather than the mere study and observation of them. Finally, the words 'use' and 'convenience' suggest the ultimate goal of engineering not only to serve the needs of man but to make things work more easily, more safely, more economically, or more comfortably for him. according to Trimble (1985, p.35), Engineering is generally defined as the process of harnessing materials for man's use. The listener must be able to deduce the specific features of engineering. Some of which include imaginative thinking and judgement experimental in combination of actions. The general conclusion of the definition of engineering is that engineering aims at man's comfort. Therefore, apart from identifying the main ideas and the supportive detail that help us to trace sequences of events, in listening for information processing, we can make generalizations and draw conclusions.

(2) Listening to Conversations

The listener can pick out specific points from conversations which involve exchange of views, idea, opinions, feelings, etc. between two or more among more persons. When these people converse, you, as a listener, would be able to determine if they are friends chatting, quarreling, arguing or discussing some serious individual or communal matters. Note that the mood of any of the speakers can change or vary in the process of the conversation. The listener would also be able to determine the nature of interaction based on the context. Listening could be exemplified on the derivation of the mood, pitch of voice, nature of conversation, the context stress and intonation in the following conversation between a medical doctor and his patient for a particular example.

Dr:	Please sit down
Patient:	Thank you, sir.
Dr:	The stomach pain has been diagnosed as uterine growth.
Patient:	Can you come again please?
	I do not understand you.
Dr:	You're just been diagnosed fibroid positive
	I hope I am making myself clear?
Patient:	This is even more confusing, sir.
Dr:	Please take this note to the theatre in the adjacent room
Patient:	What for, sir?
Dr:	You are to get prepared for the surgical removal of
	the fibroid in your uterus which is the only prescription to
	your ailment.
	Hope you know that uterus is the same as womb?
	From a Patient's Medical Record, University of Ilorin
	Teaching Hospital.

Listening to the above conversation no doubt reveals that the mode of the two speakers was initially casual. Variation in mood came when the patient was told the result of the diagnosis. Even then, the Doctor's mood remains the same. All the sentences marked by question marks are indications of high pitch insinuating consciousness. This pitch among other signals is part of what the listener listens to during conversation.

Listening for Taking Directions

The purpose of listening here is that the listener aims at understanding the direction of a place. He/she through listening to direction can trace the route as he/she understands the destination. What is most essential in this type of listening is the listener's systematic follow-up. For instance, through listening to a description of the route to Abule Egba or Mushin from Apapa area all in Lagos, the listener is expected to be able to visualize the directions vividly, if his/her listening ability is efficient and the listening skill properly utilized.

Listening for Taking Instructions

The purpose of this is to act on the information provided by the speaker. This involves the extraction of the essential on what to do. In this, the listener may not have understood the entire utterance but must be able to point out the main ideas in it by eliminating the irrelevances in the speech. The listener follows the instructions given about the speech to understand it in depth. In practical workshops, especially in the science courses such as Chemistry, Physics, Biochemistry, Mathematics, Computer, Biology, etc. and in engineering and Agricultural course as well, this type of purpose of listening is more glaring. Descriptions aim at clarity.

Things/situations, which we wish to describe, must be in vivid pictures and the speaker paints pictures in words, accents, tone, colours, shapes, and size for easy comprehensibility by the listener.

E.g "storing fish" is different from "preserving fish".

"gazing on the road" is different from "looking at the road"

Note that descriptive listening will require a lot of adjectival words to provide details and the listener aims at interpreting the speech based on these descriptive bits.

Listening for Inferences

Here, the listener goes beyond what he/she heard to deduce related meanings, opinions and views. Inference plays a vital role in listening. The aim is listening beyond the speaker's utterance by making similar inferences from outside the speech based on his/her own individual experience. Meaning here becomes inferential and elaborate. After listening to a friend's story, for instance, a good listener would want to know the following.

- (i) What lesson the story tell us?
- (ii) What have we learnt from what happened in the story?
- (iii) How does the story relate to our practical experience?

Listening to Narrations

For this type of purpose of listening, although the narrator has a story to tell or an experience to share with the listener, the sequence of what happened is what becomes very important. Events are most times stated in chronological order. Narration also involves action and these actions are sequential. It aids comprehension, interpretation and judgement. For instance, listen to the speech below to be read by your teacher or your colleague and attempt to answer the questions that follow it:

Human beings are complex creature. We often lose our ways and must grope for answers to the question "Who am I?" Our picture of self may evolve from many sources: a sudden glimpse of our image in a store window, comments of friends and family stored memories or quick impressions. We may try constantly to classify our own strengths and weaknesses, but the picture is never complete. And, too often, the picture becomes distorted.

Writers from all ages and cultures have repeated that if we do not first have self-knowledge, we cannot know other people and cannot begin to find our own pace in the world.

The Greeks inscribed the words KNOW THYSELF above the temple of the oracle at Delphi. The Spaniard, Cervantes, counseled in Don Quixote, "Make it thy business to know thyself which is the most difficult lesson in the world."

In modern times, the study of psychology has had a great influence on literature. Writers have gone more deeply into the unconscious minds of their characters in a new attempt to portray the eternal struggle to gain self-insight. The said writers take us inside the minds of their characters. The crucial action they relate is often the making of a decision or a new evaluation of inner experience. Some of the selections are fiction; others are autobiographical essays. In both cases, the writers portray moments of doubt and moments of understanding. Through such writings, readers may sharpen their own self-portraits. (Adapted from Carlsen & Gilbert, 1985, p. 644).

Comments on the Words 'Know Thyself'

The speech has shown that to "know thyself" is not a simple process. It is a continuing challenge that deepens and broadens as one move through life. We envisage men and women who had false concepts of themselves, and so fell into misadventures. We heard of people who came up with decision and in the course of making the decision, gained new knowledge of themselves. Others have reflected minds that have found peace through sound self-evaluation. Once people know and accept themselves for what they are, they open the road to a rewarding life, for they can operate securely and successfully within their known limits.

(7) Listening to Expositions

The ability to differentiate features peculiar to various speeches will help the listener to quick discover the type of text he/she is listening to. This will enhance efficient listening. Exposition requires detailed explanation of definitions. It goes ahead to make illustrations so as to enhance the intended meaning to the listener. Expositions are therefore emphatically illustrative definitions. Examples of causes of diseases could be said to be disorder, infection malnutrition, etc. listen to the following detailed exposition on soil and note the explanation given in the minute detail to illustrate very clear the characteristics and stages of soil.

Soil physicist have characterized the drying of a soil in three stages. They are: they wet stage, where the evaporation is solely determined by the meteorological conditions; an intermediate or drying stage, where the soil occurs in the wet stage early in the day, but then dries off because there is not a sufficient amount of water in the soil to meet the evaporation rate; and the dry stage, where evaporation is solely determined by the molecular transfer properties of water within the soil. There is a striking change in the evaporation rate as the soil dries during the transition from the wet stages to the drying stage. (Trimble 1985, p.47).

(8) Listening to an Arguments

An Argument involves giving a reason or reasons to support or disapprove something. It presents two ways of looking that the same issue and each of the way is not necessarily better than the other. The listener will need relevant listening ability here based on the strength of the speaker's argument and his/her listening ability to deduce the speakers' stand. Examples of argumentative topics are:

- (i) Engineering is better than Medicine
- (ii) Agriculturists are more useful than Educationists
- (iii) Science has caused more harm than good

Listening to arguments can give the listeners practice opportunities in making inferences and deductions; for instance, why are engineers better than doctors who cure them? Note for further example that the following extract on metals give a line or argument.

Why does man use metals still so much today when there are other materials, especially plastics, which are available? Metals are generally used because they offer the required strength, more than other properties, at minimum cost. Appearance is also an important factor. The main advantage of metals is their strength and toughness. Concrete may be cheaper and is often used in building, but even concrete depends on its core of steel for strength.

Plastics are lighter and more corrosion-resistant, but they are not usually as strong. Another problem with plastics is what to do with them after use. Metal object can often be broken down and the metals recycled; plastics can only be dumped or burned.

Not all metals are strong, however, copper and aluminum, for example, are both fairly weak-but if they are mixed together, the result is an alloy called aluminum bronze, which is much stronger than either pure copper or pure aluminum. Alloying is an important method of obtaining whatever special properties are required: strength, toughness, resistance to wear, magnetic properties, high electrical resistance or corrosion resistance.

The properties of a metal can be further improved by use of heat treatment. Heat treatment is the term given to a number of different procedures in which the properties of metals and alloys are changed. It usually consists of heating the metals or alloy to a selected temperature below its melting point and then cooling it at a certain rate to obtain those properties which are required. For example, hardening is used to make metals harder. Tempering makes them softer and less brittle. Annealing is carried out to make a metal soft so that it can be machined more easily. In this way, metallic materials can be produced to meet every kind of engineering specification and requirement.

When Concorde was build, a material was needed which could withstand extreme aerodynamic conditions and would have a life of at least 45,000 flying hours. To achieve his, a special aluminum alloy was developed which is tough and lightweight and is used in over 70% of Concorde's structure. Another 16% is made of high-strength steel, and titanium alloys are used in the engine surrounds to withstand temperatures of 4,000 degrees centigrade. (Johnson 1983, p.131).

In this extract, the necessity of the use of metals, plastics, copper and aluminum is motivated. Types and advantages of meals are enumerated. The argument is on the functional use of metals.

Listening for Note Taking

Listening can be redefined here as an integrated process during which utterances perceived or taken in by the ears are processed by the listener to bring about understanding. In class, the student-listener attempts to identify the main points, i.e. surface details and deduce the purpose of use of the main points in the utterance. The class situation which is a face-to-face lecture or note taking could however be from a prepared text, a report, a broadcast text, etc. However, the main points of whatever form, should harbour the subject matter or theme. Apart from identifying the key words and sentences in the main point, the listener should consider the linking elements that connect the main point to the subordinate points. A good listener must keep the format of the presentation in mind. She/he must be able to answer questions at intervals and also make theoretical references. The listener must also be able to differentiate between summary and repetition. She/he must be able to nullify the speakers' temporary predictions.

Listening to an Advertisement

In listening to an advertisement, the speaker aims at the main business of promoting a factory an establishment, particular goods or commodity. He/she therefore uses persuasive and positive language here and supports these with concrete evidence, all of which the listener must be alert to. Once a listener does not understand the language of the discourse, he will miss out

the type, level, role and purpose. The purpose and functional based of listening predetermines the listening type aimed at by both the speaker and the listener during his/her listening processes.

Listening Problems or Barriers to Effective Listening

- (i) Most Nigerian language make use of tone to distinguish one word from the other. These languages also stress every syllables equally. The English speaker, on the other hand, uses stress and intonation to effect changes in the meaning of words and sentences respectively. For instance, the words /'protest/ and /pro'test/ will have different meanings, since the stress is on the first syllable in the first one and on the second syllable in the second. Also, merely using different intonation for the same utterance would change the meaning of the word.
- (ii) Listening may be impeded as a result of psychological, physical, natural and environmental factors. In the first place, the physical, environment where listening task takes place is not conducive for the listener, the listener's rate of assimilation may be low. The listener himself/herself may feel unnecessarily uncomfortable. A given speech cannot be processed without being understood. Movement and sounds of people or object is not conducive for effective listening. Such movements distract the flowing thought of the speaker and subsequently the attention of the listener. A tranquil environment is what aids concentration.
- (iii) In addition to this, some listener s may have ear drum defects and as a result cannot grasp words clearly even when they listen. In this case, they only guess at the message, which the speaker is trying to convey.
- (iv) Some listeners are naturally excited and nervous, especially when it comes to listening to long oral discourse and their lack of mental preparedness hinders effective listening.
- (v) The listener may also not have the background knowledge of the subject matter in the text and as a result, develop negative attitude towards the subject.
- (vi) Many listeners, in addition to these, lack the ability to make inferences and predictions. Some cannot make out the cause and effect of the issue in a text and they end up arriving at illogical connections, conclusion and summary.
- (vii) Clarity and simplicity of what is being listened to, is of importance and the speed of the material being read may hinder the listening process. If the speaker is too fast, the listener may not be able to comprehend the Essential details of the message and information in the speech.

Listening in the ESL (English as Second Language) Classroom Situation

Lubega (1987, p.174) observes that as a result of its abstractness, listening skill is perhaps the hardest skill out of the four communicative skills of English, though usually taken for granted. Most learners spend more time in listening to foreign language than in producing it themselves. They aim endlessly at understanding what is said to them during face-to-face interaction. They try to extract meanings as best as they can from what is being said. In this case, it is crucial that their receptive repertoire be matched against the productive repertoire of the speaker. Hence, he must at the same time be prepared to cope with the speech produced.

The listener needs to be trained to enhance his listening ability especially in the English for Secondary Language user's (ESL) case. The major reason being that some sounds in the foreign language are not present in our languages, using Nigeria learners as example. A learner in this case tends to mistake the foreign sound he hears for the familiar sound in his own native language. Training to properly distinguish between the similar sounds of the foreign language

and the learner's native language therefore becomes necessary. An ESL listener must know the need to refine listening and tune his/her ears to hear distinctions of consonants and vowel phonemes in English phonology, for prominence and accentuation or emphasis purposes in most cases. This habit will enable a listener to make more sense of what the speaker is saying. A listener pay attention, yet may not listen properly, because of some unpleasant mood, distractive noise or difficult diction, inability to distinguish sounds (minimal pairs) words, synonyms, syntactic strings and semantic interpretations.

A language user and learner should be interested in all forms of oral discourse. As Doctor, Counsellors, Engineers, Agriculturalists, Language Specialists, Religious Leaders, Scientists and Computer Operators, second language users should know that listening efficiency is part of their job. They have to listen with care and show concern for their patients, learners, trainers and followers to be able to solve problems and achieve their aims. What the speaker with whom you have to necessarily relates, says, how he says things and how he moves and behaves, definitely aid your listening ability. Lack of mastery of listening skills will render inefficient, the reciprocity which characterises listening and speaking situations.

Conclusion

Listeners must first and foremost develop auditory discrimination among sounds, tones, stress, intonation, words and sentences. Auditory discrimination is an important aspect of listening. This is for the fact that it aids general comprehension of listening types, purposes, processes and aims. Listening is not only hearing. It goes beyond hearing to paying attention to cogent message, information, argument directions, instructions, etc. Listeners must develop good listening habits to be able to catch the required information at the right time and be able to respond appropriately. In this unit, you have learnt:

- (1) Meaning, distinct nature and characteristic of listening
- (2) Difference between listening and hearing
- (3) Types, levels, purpose and role of listening
- (4) Problems of listening

Out of the four skills of language namely listening; speaking, reading and writing, listening is the most primary. From general observation, we spend more time in listening than other language skills. Effective learning is as a result of effective listening. As we listen, we get information and share experiences with one another. Listeners must therefore be able to develop good attitudes towards listening in order to deduce information, analyse and effectively appreciate a text.

Learners must be able to listen to directions, instructions, advertisements, arguments and narrations.

Revision Exercise I

- (i) What is the appropriate title for this speech?
- (ii) What are the sources of the picture of ourselves?
- (iii) What is the theme of the speech?
- (iv) Who are the people that the author used, to exemplify people who through difficulty have truly known themselves?
- (v) Through which disciplines have people discovered more about themselves than they previously did?
- (vi) Which of the following is incorrect?

- (a) Knowledge of oneself is essential.
- (b) Knowing oneself better can change one's behavior
- (c) Self-knowledge gives a person confidence in crisis situation.
- (d) Knowing oneself is an impossible task.

Revision Exercise II

The following listening activities are adapted from Wright (1989, p.30).

Activity I

State True (T) or False (F) in the boxes provided below:

- (i) We can hear sound that we may not have listened to.
- (ii) Hearing is active while listening is passive.
- (iii) Rearrange the following listening communication processes in the right order.
 - (a) Destination
 - (b) Information source
 - (c) Transmitter
 - (d) Noise source
 - (e) Receiver
- (iv) Select the false option out of the following:
Analytical listening is also _____
 - (a) Inferential listening
 - (b) Critical listening
 - (c) Note taking listening

Activity II

Listen to the following diagnosis of a medical doctor to be read to you by your friend or lecturer. Answer the questions that follow it.

Well, Mr. Jameson, I am sorry to see that your back is still causing you pain and that you have now developed a weakness in your right foot. The weakness is due to the continued pressure on the nerve roots supplying the muscles of your leg. This pressure, of course, is taking place at the level of the disc between the lumbar vertebrae. Due to this worsening of the condition, I think that there is now a strong possibility that you require an operation on the back to remove the disc where it's pressing on the nerve. The operation will need to be carried out by a surgeon specialized in this work, a neurosurgeon. The operation itself will only immobilize you for a few days and you'll soon be up and about again and back to the physiotherapist to improve the strength of your muscles, both in your back and this leg. If you don't have the operation, the risk is that your right foot will be permanently weak. We want to avoid this at all costs. Are there any questions you would like to ask me? (Trimble 1985, p.52).

- (i) Write out the topic of the passage.
- (ii) Write the main ideas of the passage.
- (iii) Write the major theme and the sub-themes of the passage.
- (iv) Write a summary of the passage.

Activity III

Pronounce the words in brackets in each of the following sentences. Then choose the more appropriate one to complete each sentence.

1. He is a new (con'vert, 'convert).
2. Who can (con'vict, 'convict) the magistrate?

- Who is not (pre'sent, 'present)?
- The (re'fuse, 'refuse) disposal van has broken down.
- I can't take (in'sult, 'insult) from anybody
- Who will help us (ex'tract, 'extract) the important points from the long passage?
- Why do you (re.bel, 'rebel) against the authority?
- He has been provided with an (es'cort, 'escort)
- I did not believe that may interest could (con'flict, 'conflict) with yours.
- You need a fishing (per'mit, 'permit) before you can fish in that dam.

Activity IV

Let your friend read the following ten statements to you allowing 15 seconds pause after each statement. During the pause period, decide which of the four options offered closely represents what you have read.

1. I have no idea why Father objected to our plans.
 - (a) Father objected because we have no firm idea we're doing
 - (b) Father never has good ideas
 - (c) Father had no idea what our plans were
 - (d) I don't know what father didn't like about our plans.

ANS:

2. Yisa can run like a rabbit, sing like a bird, see like a cat in the dark.
 - (a) Yisa likes animals
 - (b) Yisa is talented
 - (c) Yisa likes the dark
 - (d) Yisa sees cats in the dark.

ANS:

3. Aminat drinks only well water because she thinks it tastes good.
 - (a) Aminat cannot taste very well
 - (b) Aminat drinks anything that taste good
 - (c) Aminat likes the flavor of water from a well
 - (d) Aminat is better now because she drank a lot of water

ANS:

4. Although we arrived early, the queue was so long that there were no seats left when we finally got to the head of it.
 - (a) There were seats at the end of the queue
 - (b) We did not get a seat
 - (c) We sat in queue a long time
 - (d) We arrive too early for a seat

ANS:

5. On Wednesday, Abu will be four, and Audu will be eight years older than that on Thursday.
 - (a) Abu is four and Audu is eight
 - (b) On Thursday, Audu will be twelve and Abu four
 - (c) Abu's birthday is the same as Audu's
 - (d) On Friday, both Abu and Audu will be twelve

ANS:

6. Even without rain, the farmland remains moist because of irrigation.
 - (a) Irrigation helps rain to wet the farmland
 - (b) Farmland becomes moist without rain

- (c) Artificial supply of water moistens the farmland when there is no rain.
- (d) Farmland can become moist without rain and also without applying irrigation

ANS:

7. Akin has goiter, though he takes iodine confirmed food.
- (a) Akin is not supposed to have goiter because he takes iodine contained food
 - (b) Iodine contained food should not stop Akin from having goiter
 - (c) Akin has goiter because he doesn't take iodine contained food
 - (d) Food containing iodine can stop Akin contacting goiter

ANS:

8. It's amazing that Ope is pregnant while she's still a virgin.

- (a) Ope can be a virgin and also be pregnant
- (b) How come Ope is a virgin and is pregnant?
- (c) Ope cannot be a virgin
- (d) Ope is done with because she is pregnant

ANS:

9. The Engineer driving Tunde's vehicles dimmed the headlights of the vehicle.

- (a) The Engineer dimmed his head into the light of Tunde's vehicle
- (b) The Engineer lowered the beams not to dazzle the driver of another car
- (c) Tunde's headlights up this vehicle the Engineers was driving
- (d) The headlight of Tunde's vehicle was dimmed by the Engineer

ANS:

10. The doctor gave me an ideal treatment. I am now as fit as a fiddle.

- (a) I'm good health as a result of the doctor's treatment on me
- (b) I'm fitted fiddle because of the ideal treatment the doctor gave me
- (c) The doctor gave me the treatment for me to be fiddle
- (d) I'm in good health because of the Doctor's deal

ANS:

Answers to Listening Activities I-IV

Activity I

- i. /T/
- ii. /F/
- iii. Information source, transmitter, noise, source, receiver destination.
- iv. Critical Listening

Activity II

- (I) The main topic of the passage is "The diagnosis of the weakness of Mr. Jameson's leg".

- (II) The main ideas are:

- (a) Pain in the back
- (b) Weakness in right foot
- (c) Pressure on the nerve roots
- (d) Worsening condition
- (e) Operation

- (III) The major theme is the weakness of Mr. Jameson's leg muscle and the sub-themes are as in (a), (c) – (e) above

Mr. Jameson has muscular pains in his leg at the level of the disc between the **lumber** vertebrae. To arrest this, an operation is required to be carried out by a **neurosurgeon**.

Activity III

- | | |
|--------------|--------------|
| 1. 'convert, | 6. ex'ract |
| 2. con'vict | 7. re'bel |
| 3. 'present | 8. 'escort |
| 4. 'refuse | 9. con'flict |
| 5. 'insult | 10. 'permit |

ACTIVITY IV

- | | |
|--------|---------|
| 1. (d) | 6. (c) |
| 2. (b) | 7. (a) |
| 3. (c) | 8. (b) |
| 4. (b) | 9. (d) |
| 5. (b) | 10. (a) |

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