

“Importance of Listening in Communication”

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Abstract: This paper is going to throw light on the aspect how listening is integral part of communication. Communication is the key to success in every organization. The main purpose of communication is to get across message lucidly. It requires conscious efforts from the participants to make the communication effective. The sender and receiver both should have mutual interest to have proper communication. If the process of communication is fraught with errors, messages are likely to be misinterpreted by the receiver. Since communication is a skill, it means that it can be learned and mastered. To acquire mastery over any language we need to focus on improving our abilities in Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing that language. In this paper we will look on the various ways, methods and techniques which will help to improve our communication skills by listening effectively.

Keywords: Communication, listening, hearing, language, speaking, reading, writing.

I. Introduction-What is listening Skill?

Listening is the process of receiving, interpreting and reacting to a message received from the speaker. Listening is an important aid to communication. It is one of the major skills for mastering language other than the three being speaking, reading and writing.

Difference between listening and hearing. Or Listening is not the same as Hearing.

Most of the times listening and hearing are taken as one and the same by most people. In fact both listening and hearing are different from each other. Hearing is unintentional. Hearing is continuous while listening is quiet intentional and specific. We pay attention to a very few or required sounds only and understand them. This is listening. Listening involves reception of sounds, recognition of sounds and comprehension of sounds. Listening is a psychological and neurological process while hearing is only a physiological process.

Hearing is very general while listening is a specific activity. Listening starts with hearing. Hearing is basically an ability but listening is a skill. The listening skill is to be developed systematically and intentionally. Hearing is related only to the reception of sounds. Hearing is the primary stage where the sounds or words are received. But listening is an advanced stage where the listener is focused on the sounds heard.

Process of Listening-

In order to be a good listener, it is necessary to understand the various stages of listening. These are:

The sensing/ selecting stage- The listener selects, from among a multiple of stimuli, the only one that seems important at that point in time and converts it into a message.

The interpreting stage - The listener is engaged in the act of decoding the message. It is at this stage that the listener faced numerous barriers that could be semantic, linguistic, psychological, emotional, or environmental.

The evaluating stage- Critical listening takes place at this stage. The listener assigns a meaning to the message, draws inferences, takes an overview of the messages, and seeks accuracy of information and evidence. Often, the listener is disturbed by past experiences, beliefs, and emotions, which often come in the way of the evaluation process.

The responding stage- This is the stage when the listener is ready to respond. In addition, this feedback stage is important for a speaker. The listener's non-verbal signals tell the speaker whether he or she has been understood or not. The speaker also has to be able to understand whether the listener is faking attention.

The memory stage- This is final stage of listening. Effective listening helps listeners retain chunks of what they have heard. 'Memorability' (the quality or state of being memorable) is an important index for listeners to test how much matter has been stored in their memory banks. Unfortunately, no matter how brilliant a speaker is, most listeners can retain only 10-25% of a talk or a presentation the day after.

Types of Listening-

Listening is a process of absorbing words and selecting meaning. Listening is a skill –it can be developed and improved upon. Listening is classified into the following main types-

1. **Informative Listening-** informative listening refers to the condition where the listener's key concern is to understand the message. Informative listening, or listening to understand, is found in all areas of our lives. Lot of our learning came from informative learning. For example, we listen to lectures or instructions from teachers and what we learn depends on how well we listen. We listen to instructions, speeches, and reports,

if we listen poorly we are not equipped with the information we need. Effective informative listening demands concentration.

2. **Attentive Listening-** When people listen attentively, their goal is to understand and remember what they are hearing. Attentive listeners have relational goals like giving a positive impression, advancing the relationship, or demonstrating care. Communication Scholars have identified three listening skills clusters and the accompanying behavior that are used by attentive listeners-
 - a. Attention Skills
 - b. Reflecting skills
 - c. Summative skills.
3. **Passive Listening-** Passive listening is very stern, firm and orthodox type of listening.
4. **Appreciative listening-** In this type of listening, listeners appreciate the speaker. This is encouraging type of listening. The listeners appreciate and support the speaker.
5. **Evaluative listening-** In this type of listening, listeners make judgments about what the other person is saying. Spectators evaluate what speaker said against our morals, assessing them as superior or inferior, worthy or unworthy. It is also called judgmental or interpretive listening.

Barriers to effective listening-

1.Superiority complex: Often individuals having higher levels of intelligence, suffer from this attitude. They think that they know everything and do not give much attention to people who are inferior to them.

2.Inferiority complex: This category of people suffer from low self-esteem and confidence. They always surrender easily being under the impression that they have lower intelligence, than others. These people are detrimental to organization since they cannot take part actively in brainstorming session which are common to business enterprises. Thus they become a barrier.

3.Blaming others (You attitude): Some people are pompous in their behavior. They have a tendency of blaming others for their mistakes. This people do not easily accept their mistakes as a result it leads to a drop in positive communication.

4.Selective hearing:. When the presentation is about 'Production' alone. The people in production pay attention similarly when it is about marketing. Only the marketing people pay attention. This is a barrier in the communication between the two departments and hinders the progress of the company.

6.Introvert behavior: Often people with introvert behavior are classified as arrogant people. Shedding the fear of being laughed at can easily overcome this barrier. Introvert people find themselves to be misfits' in the society.

Ways to improve listening skills-

II. Conclusion

The most basic and powerful way to connect to another person is to listen. Just listen. Perhaps the most important thing we ever give each other is our attention.

(Dr.Rachel Naomi Remen)

Sources-

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

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Differences between hearing and listening

Hearing is simply the physical act of sound waves entering our ears and being transported to our brain. This is a **passive** process that requires no effort. No meaning is attached. If your ears work and you are in a place where sound is being transmitted, you will hear it. **Listening** is an **active** skill. It requires effort, and you can choose not to do it. Listeners take sounds and attach meanings to them. If they comprehend what a speaker has said, they can interpret and respond to the message. This is called **active listening**