

LISTENING FOR BETTER UNDERSTANDING AND EFFECTIVE INTERACTION

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Abstract

Listening is part and parcel of everyday life. Due to partial listening or lack of listening skills, misunderstanding happens in many places. Listening is an art, and effective listening plays a vital role among families, friends and also in workplaces. Listening is beyond hearing which builds relationship and creates a bond among the people. Listening is a powerful form of observing, acknowledging, focusing, and respecting someone. It shows how much importance we are showing on others. Good listening skills make the workers more productive and create a mutual understanding among them. Better understanding makes us to learn and appreciate the whole world. So a good listener can rule the world.

We are learning to listen and listening to learn a lot. So listening helps for equal learning. Listening research says we spend our time 9% on writing skills, 16% on reading skills, 30% on speaking and 45% on listening skills. Appreciative listening always plays a main role among other type of listening skills. People in the modern world are crazy in praising. Everyone is willing to talk and no one is willing listen the words of others in the modern world. Critical listening is in the dangerous side because we have to analyze and come to a conclusion. Whatever the result we say will affect someone in a positive or negative way. How can we improve the listening skill of the students outside the class room is the main role of this paper.

Listening is of 4 types, appreciative listening, critical listening, relationship listening and discriminative listening. Listening skill is one of the leadership skills. Listening encourages having an open mind, a smile, eye contact, and posture, comprehending, reflecting, questioning, clarifying, and summarizing. Listening process has five different stages. Another word for listening is silent. We listen to obtain the information, receive and try to understand the words of the speaker, we comprehend the information, remember and evaluate the information and enjoy it finally. Active listening is a process where happens the developing curiosity in learning the information, having an open mindedness, and desire for continuous growth in listening and giving feedback. Active listening is a powerful way to capture the entire information. In active listening process we pay attention and show body language and gestures that we are engaged and responding appropriately. ***“Active listening has been a needed administrative skill which is necessary for successful interaction with employees, customers, and colleagues (Comer & Drollinger, 1999; Hassall, Joyce, Arquero Montano, & Donoso Anes, 2003; Ramsey & Sohi, 1997).”*** According to (Gosling & Mintzberg, 2006), active listening skills increase the quality of interaction with others and the discussions are vital. While efforts have been made for active listening in higher education, more time is spent teaching speaking than teaching listening, even though most people spend much more time listening than speaking (Janusik, 2002).

Effective listening is vital for better critical understanding. Effective listening helps people to collect information and promotes critical thinking for successful communication. Effective listening pinpoints positive relationship and better critical understanding. Effective listeners pay attention to the speaker, they keep eye contact show interest by nodding, and smiling at correct times. Effective listening skills make anyone a better listener. An individual learns how to tackle barriers in effective listening. He or she knows how to listen carefully, how to improve communication skills, how to maximize productivity, and how to build an interpersonal relationship.

Effective listening skills lead to critical thinking. Critical thinking initiates where the listener both quantitatively and qualitatively assesses the process. Critical thinking is involved with cognition which includes observation, interpretation, analysis, inference, evaluation, explanation, and metacognition. Critical thinkers use high active listening and in addition critical thinking skills. Critical thinking leads to successful communication and public speaking. Empathetic listening

promotes effective listening, where the listener emotionally presents more accurately and which ultimately leads to better understanding. Many successful men in the society have good listening skill, which is why they lead better customer satisfaction, great productivity and sharing of information which leads to more creative and innovative work. *“Richard Branson frequently quotes listening as one of the main factors behind the success of Virgin”.*

“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

“Teaching active listening is changing in general. There is a demand for active listening skills. Active listening is so much more than just hearing, it includes both cognitive and behavioral activity (Janusik, 2010).” Listening skill can be benefitted from step by step of improving it. A better listener can improve his productivity as well as his ability to influence, persuade and negotiate others. Moreover, a better listener avoids conflict and misunderstandings. So a better listener always achieves the success in his life. *Columnist and editor Doug Larson believed, “Wisdom is the reward you get for a lifetime of listening when you'd have preferred to talk.”* Stephen R. Covey says, *“Most people do not listen with the intent to understand; they listen with the intent to reply”.*

Four main reasons of poor listening points out not concentrating on the speaker on time and missing the details and points further moving to conclusion and personal appearance. Listening barriers depend on many reasons. It may be physical or psychological, social, political, age old behaviours, and sometimes electrical. Effective listening includes less concentration, distraction, giving less priority, less judgment about the speaker, and focusing on the style rather than substance, confusion on the topic etc. Listening could be difficult perhaps we could think sometimes faster than the speaker. A human could listen at a rate of up to 450 words per minute but an average man speaks only 125-175 words per minute, it is easy to be impatient or let the mind wander.

Listening has been defined as a metacognitive study. Most of the researchers point out pre and post listening strategies and top down and bottom up methods. Connect, predict, talk about new words, listen for answers, and take notes and re- listen as pre listening strategies. After listening strategies involved with respond, summarize and extend as after listening strategies. Continuous

hearing of something automatically enters in to the subconscious mind and a person receives it and speaks the new language, even though he or she does not have the idea of purposely listening it.

A person learns a lot externally through news, movies, songs, any interesting matter including stories. If he or she is not compelled to do anything but they are in area where a new language is spoken even though they are not consciously hearing, the language reaches the subconscious level of the brain. He or she speaks the language, even though they did not learn the language purposely. When a person is in a new area where his native language hasn't been heard by him speaks the new language automatically and he forgets, or searching the words of his own language when he meets his own native speakers. Now he is familiar with the new language and the old language goes out of his conscious, if he is not using it for years, continuously speaks the new language and forgets his own language. Necessity makes a man to become perfect. When he is in the stage of living in a new area automatically he learns the language and some of the native speakers who help him to learn the language or try to correct the mistakes done by him.

Effective interaction skill improves the life of the user. Through the eye contact proper attention can be made, asking open ended questions, asking inquisitive questions, clarification, paraphrasing, reflecting the answers, summarizing are the step by process of active listening skills habits.

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