

TYPES OF LISTENING SKILLS: BARRIERS AND TIPS TO OVERCOME THEM

Ch. P. Raju

Guest Faculty of English, IIT Srikakulam, AP, India.

chodavarapuraju@gmail.com



ABSTRACT

It is evident that communication plays a really significant function in both personal and professional lives. Effective communication skill assist in organizing and sustaining relationships; in negotiations; in settling conflicts and in dealing with masses of different mentalities. The young graduates who seek jobs, particularly in the private sector are needed to be effective communicators. Communication skills are much needed for the employees as they are really helpful in sustaining in the present jobs and in getting promoted to higher posts. Listening plays a critical part in communication. Listening has the same importance as speaking in the process of communication. Since listening is an essential component of human communication, we need to consider it as a peculiar science. It is because the skill-'listening' plays a critical part in seeing another person and in conveying our empathy to others. Anything that creates any inconvenience in giving or receiving information is called a barrier. On that point are certain obstacles in the process of listening namely physical barriers, psychological barriers, ethnic barriers, organizational barriers, etc. In this report the author attempts to explain various types of listening; discuss different types of listening barriers and propose answers to surmount the roadblocks.

Keywords: Listening Skills, Types Of Listening, Listening Barriers, Tips to Overcome the Roadblocks

Citation: Ch.P.Raju. Types Of Listening Skills: Barriers And Tips To Overcome Them. International Journal of Advanced Multidisciplinary Scientific Research(IJAMSR ISSN:2581-4281). Vol 1, Issue2 ,April,2018, #Art.14, pp 41-45

Introduction

In the process of communication, listening is an activity in which the listener or receiver pays attention to and/or takes notice of what the speaker says so that the listener receives, understands information and provides a response to the speaker. Listening is as important as speaking in the form of information transmitted. The listening process begins with obtaining the message; the listener interprets it; efforts to recall it; evaluates it after analyzing and finally he answers by sending the feedback to the speaker or transmitter. "A soul who picks up and understands information or an instruction, and then opts not to comply with it or to agree to it, has listened to the loudspeaker, even though the answer is not what the speaker wanted." (Purdy, Michael and Deborah Borisoff, 1997).

Comparing to hearing, listening is a more sober matter. Learning is a instinctive process and it submits without any intentional attempt by the listener, whereas listening is an intentional effort. Roland Barthes explains it: "Hearing is a physiological phenomenon; listening is a psychological act." Listening takes place in five stages such as receiving, understanding, remembering, evaluating and answering. It is broadly conceived that the listening skill is a natural phenomenon and there is no demand to gain it specifically with more or less elbow grease. In fact, listening is a natural process, but it should be enhanced by hard study and repetition. If you desire to be an efficient communicator, you must be an effective listener. It is argued that the listener has more responsibility than the loudspeaker for the successful completion of communication.

Hearing is not mere hearing, but by listening to someone

or something, you get information, understand something, receive instructions, find entertainment, get solace etc. For capturing all these activities done successfully, you necessitate to pay particular attention to what is stated. You cannot practice all these bodily functions by simply listening to someone or something. Immediately you can read that listening is more sensitive and intensive than hearing. Learning is a spontaneous and ever occurring process, whereas listening is an intentional and interpretative activity.

Types Of Listening

The process of listening can be divided into various types based on the purposes of listening. The purpose determines the form of listening. Various purposes require various forms of listening. Every case of listening has its own function.

Primary Types of Listening

Primarily listening can be parted into two types: discriminative and comprehensive listening. These two cases of listening are basic and rudimentary to all sorts of listening. The respite of listening types falls under these two principal types of listening.

Discriminative Listening

Discriminative listening is the beginning of the human listening process and it starts out when a man is an infant. During his infancy, man starts distinguishing the difference between sounds: from human sounds of animal sounds and distinguishes the difference between voices of people by taking heed to the sounds. In this process man cannot read the substances of the sounds properly. By listening to the sounds and discovering them, man can realize the human emotions.

Comprehensive Listening

Comprehensive listening comes next to discriminative hearing for man starts understanding the meanings of the words and messages. The competence of the spoken words or messages may differ from one to some other individual. Postures and gestures play a vital part in understanding the language and/or messages. Thus, by this time man has determined not only the meanings of words and language skills, but also the meanings of non-verbal cues. Comprehension listener can also be called content listening, informative listening and total hearing.

Sub-Types of Listening

Critical Listening

In the operation of critical listening, the listener evaluate, judge, form opinions about what is being read. For this, the listener must be capable of analyzing, comparing and/or relaying the message to the existing regulations, norms, principles, organization, knowledge and other considerable things as come to a stopping point. The listener may understand the interior significance of the message. He decides to discover the truth of the speech by weighing the pros and cons and declares it good or bad, worthy or unworthy. It is also called evaluative or interpretative or judgmental listening. The auditor must do two things in this process: listening and comprehending which should run simultaneously and successfully.

Informational Listening

Informational listening is a very usual practice by people of every human walk. Every day, every one listens for information: members of a household, employees in an organization, students in educational foundations. The primary aim of this type of listening is to learn, receive instructions, etc. Informational listening plays a major part in the communication at workplaces.

Appreciative Listening

In this type of listening, the listener listens to certain information as to appreciate it. The information may be a piece of music, parts of speech, a piece of poem, dialogues in a play, radio programme, show or episode on TV etc. In this process, listener's response is important rather than the value of the message. The quality of listener's appreciation purely depends more on the listener's tastes, wishes and dislikes rather than the character of the message. The tone of taste as well depends on the listener's perception of things, previous exposure to such things and presentation which includes the medium, the mount and the style, personality of a presenter and the surroundings.

Biased Listening

In this type of listening, the listener comes with a fixed perspective and hears and understands how he thinks rather than what the speaker says. The listener comes expecting what the speaker is going to say and he does not heed what the speaker actually says, but ironically the listener understands something (what he has expected) from the words of the speaker rather than what the speaker really says. This is the outcome of the listener's preoccupied mind or prejudices. The listener never pays attention to the words spoken, he understands them what he expects to listen or what the speaker will pronounce. In this type, the listeners seem stereotypes.

Pseudo Listening

Pseudo means false or acted. Pseudo listening means you pretend to take heed to the loudspeaker system. In this procedure, you nod your head or smile while message is being sent, in fact, you are thinking of something else and you are not taking heed to anything from the loudspeaker. Sometimes it is done by you only to give an impression that you are very concerned to the loudspeaker. Pseudo listening is also called false listening and non-listening.

Sympathetic Listening

In sympathetic listening, the listener cares about the speaker or the sender and expresses his concern for the speaker's sorrows and/or joys.

Empathetic Listening

Empathetic listening goes beyond sympathetic listening and the listener treats the speaker's emotions as he gained. The listener replaces the speaker with himself in terms of having the tactile sensations and emotions of the loudspeaker system. The listener feels the feelings and emotions of the speaker rather than simply listens. Empathetic listening is something more sensitive than sympathetic listening.

Therapeutic Listening

Therapeutic listening is more intensive and sensitive than empathetic listening. In this process of listening, the listener is more concerned to help the speaker in not only understanding the speaker's feelings, but also reducing the sorrow or sadness and increasing the happy mood. So the listener helps the speaker get relieved from grief, mood or become comfortable or become more joyful.

Dialogic Listening

In the process of Dialogic listening, the hearer and the speaker form some kind of relationship by exchanging feelings, thoughts, estimates and other info which may be personal or professional. It is as well known as relational listening.

Relationship Listening

Relationship listening is a peculiar form of listening which intends to forge a kinship with a specific purpose or motto this purpose or motto may be purely commercial or personal. It helps in forming and retaining relationships with others. It avails to be in touch with others.

Full is Listening

Full listening happens when you want to see what the speaker says. It needs close and deliberate attention to what is being said as you do not desire to miss any detail of the message. Probably you get your doubts cleared up by repeating what has been said or by asking questions or by sharing your views or knowledge at the end or during the conversation. More often than not, this type of listening is practiced in all official communications and important personal conversations.

Deep Listening

Deep listening helps you understand the genuineness of the loudspeaker. You pay careful attention to not only the words or message, but also every clue given by the speaker –be it body language or voice inflection. You move beyond language or message: you try to interpret the entire personality of the loudspeaker system. In this kind of listening, the listening process exceeds the boundary of mere receiving and understanding and goes far to realize the whole personality of the loudspeaker with his strong points and weaknesses, prejudices and fancies. That is why it is called a whole person listening. If full listening helps understanding the entire message, deep listening helps understanding the entire message and personality of the loudspeaker system.

Workplace Listening:

Workplace listening is another variety of active listening which is rattling essential to those who work in an establishment. Since an employee who works in an organization deal with his fellow workers, superiors, people outside the organization belonging to different ages, sexualities, cultures, etc., requires a special kind of listening skills and suffers to pay careful attention to the loudspeaker system. He has to pay attention to the non-verbal communication and recognize the cultural aspects as well. Workplace listening skills are very essence of career success, organizational effectiveness, and worker satisfaction. A listener in workplace listening, is to take in, comprehend, understand, evaluate and finally act accordingly.

Other Types of Listening

Initial Listening: With it you just listen to the first few words of the speaker, and start to analyze and/or give a reply without listening to the rest.

Selective Listening: It involves in listening to a few selective things which you require to listen to or you think important and ignore the balance of speech or

message.

Partial Listening: In it you are only distracted from the process of listening by the influence of your previous knowledge related to the message or same kind of thoughts said by another person etc.

Rapport Listening: This type of listening is done by journalists, stenographers, personal assistants, etc. whose duty is to create notes or prepare reports of the lectures or conversations. In this type of listening, the listener makes notes while taking heed to the spoken language or conversation.

Reflective Listening: Reflective listening is a mutual process. The listener generally sends back an estimate of his own drawn from the message. In this process both the talker and the listener understand that the message is understood as meant by the loudspeaker.

Barriers to Listening Skills and Tips to Overcome Them

Now you are going to learn about the listening barriers: how and why they occur and how to overcome them. The listening barriers discussed hereunder are not linked to any specific context and/or situation, but are handled with an overall position. Anyhow, this unit touches the listening barriers pertaining to all varieties of contexts and situations as a whole. There are so many barriers to listening skills which become a great obstacle to the process of communication. The barriers that distract the listener from listening to the speaker can be generally split into two types: external and inner components.

External Barriers

Physical or environmental barriers, semantic barriers, organizational barriers, cross-cultural barriers, technological barriers can be taken to be external factors that are responsible for distracting the listener from listening to the loudspeaker.

Internal Barriers

Internal barriers can be subdivided into two types: psychological barriers and physical disabilities.

Psychological Barriers:

The various emotions and/or moods that obstruct you from listening to the speaker are when you get angry; when you shout; when you grieve over something; when you are overjoyed to listen to it. Sometimes you stop listening when you start evaluating the site; when you have your mind wander, thinking about your knowledge

belonging to the speech or something else; when you don't want to listen because of your bias; when you don't want to listen because you are tired or disinterested; when you are not trained for the conversation; when you become bored; when the speaker uses incomprehensible vocabulary or unknown subject; when the topic purely unnecessary to you. Altogether, these are taken as psychological barriers which can cause for your poor listening.

Physical Disabilities:

Human physical disabilities such as ill health, tiredness, sleeplessness, hearing problem, dumbness, eyesight problems are instances of internal elements that hinder the listener from paying attention to the speaker and to his speech. These are seen as internal components which can cause for your poor listening.

Other Barriers to Listening Skills

There are other significant barriers to the effective listening. The auditor gets to listen to the speaker with a lot of or a specific expectation. One of the biggest drawbacks with human listening is that the listeners usually come to listen to somebody with expecting or assuming or hoping or with preoccupied mind. When the receiver comes with assumptions to take heed to the speaker, he frequently listens to what expects to listen to rather than what the speaker actually says. This process leads to the receiver to pass over into false conclusions of the communication.

Tips:

- You should proceed with an open mind without any preoccupations or expectations when you are dying to listen to someone. You must be with a willing mind to heed to the loudspeaker system.
- Sometimes the listener comes to a one conclusion without taking heed to the speaker altogether. Sometimes the listener interrupts the speaker to articulate his narrative or experience which obstructs the flow of communication and the listening process.
- Pay attention to the conversation and learn to take heed to the whole message; you should not jump to your own (incorrect) conclusions without listening completely. Heed to the complete message before evaluating the speaker or conversation. Don't get ready to tell your story before the speaker ends up his speech.
- The listener may shut his ears to the speaker when the speaker speaks of ideals and values which are quite contrary to the listener's opinions. The listener may become mixed up or distracted when the speaker changes the topics

very often without finishing the former single.

- The speaker should not vary the topics abruptly and he has to change the issue only after completing the current single.
- Noise is one of the most important barriers of oral communication; it is unacceptable for both speaker and listener to survive on their conversation when there is interference. Noise makes listening impossible.
- Try to shorten the noise or avoid noisy places for conversations. If the two endeavors are not successful, stop conversation in any noisy atmosphere.
- On that point are certain non-verbal elements which can work as barriers to the effective listening. Poor eye contact maintained by either speaker or listener or both of them causes for poor listening. Inappropriate posture and gestures by both or any one of the speaker or listener can lead to a poor listening.
- Listening is not purely auditory but it is also visual: the research tells us in face to face conversation majority of information transmitted through the body language of the speaker rather than words. Thus, body language plays a substantial part in communicating data.
- Maintaining proper body language such as attitudes and gestures while communication is operating on is must. When the body language of the speaker goes contrary to his speech, a listener may not trust the speaker. At the same time, if the hearer does not practice proper body language in accordance with the conversation, the speaker may doubt the sincerity of listening. Being a listener, you should maintain proper eye contact. In this context, both speaker and auditor should maintain proper eye contact.

General Tips to Overcome Barriers to Listening Skills

- Remember, communication is a reciprocal process. Without the receiver's consent, you cannot transmit any message to him. Listening has the same significance as speaking in conversation therefore receiver has an equal position as speaker in conversation. Then, give importance to listening. You must be an attentive and careful listener. You should not hear, but take heed.'
- Meditating is another means of reiterating what the speaker has said; this helps both the talker and the listener understand that their conversation is leading along a good path. Another advantage of reflection is that through

the reflection of the auditor, the speaker comes to recognize that the listener perfectly understands what he is reading.

- Getting clarification is a mode in which both the talker and the listener come to know that both of them are on the right path of both speaking and taking heed. The listener gets his doubts cleared up by taking questions; this indicates that the listener is active. In the similar way, the speaker asks questions the listener; this facilitates the speaker know whether to work out his topic or not.
- Proper context and time are also very important for speaking and listening.
- Pay tending to only one conversation at a time and don't try to listen to many conversations at a time.
- You should not guess or care about any other thing while taking heed to the loudspeaker.
- By asking questions every bit to get clarifications or as to ask to expand the topic, the listener becomes active listener. This indicates that the listener has an interest in the matter and he is actively listening to the loudspeaker.

Conclusion

There is no doubt in saying that effective communication skills play major role in the successful functioning of an organisation, be it a commercial or noncommercial organisation. Either oral or written communication helps the formation not simply in its internal functions such as decision making, preparation, organizing, actuating and manipulating but also in its external functions viz. Dealing with clients, business negotiations. One of the two major facets of communication, listening skills has its own part in the successful operation of an establishment.

References

1. Purdy, Michael and Deborah Borisoff, eds. *Listening in Everyday Life: A Personal and Professional Approach*. University Press of America. 1997.
2. Barthes, Roland. *The Responsibility of Forms*. New York, Hill and Wang. 1985.