

Week 2 & 3

24/7/2024 & 31/7/2025

The Importance of Listening and speaking skills

Speaking and listening are fundamental human communicative tools and since the beginning of humankind have been our most basic and primal way of conveying messages.

- Kline (1996) states that being aware of the difference between hearing and listening is an important feature for learning and teaching listening effectively. He describes the difference as follows: “Hearing is the reception of sound; Listening is the attachment of meaning to the sound. Hearing is passive, listening is active.”

- The skill of listening is important in learning any language, and that can be observed in little babies. In observing the development of children over the years an important pattern was discovered; most of them spent their entire first 1.5 to 2 years of their lives listening to their parents, listening to others, and trying to make sense of their surroundings. They can barely talk at that age but that does not mean communication is not taking place. The most powerful indicator that the skill of listening has such a tremendous influence on learning a language is that although children cannot necessarily speak at a young age, they understand many things asked of them.

The HEAR strategy is important in learning any language. HEAR stands for (Halt Engage – Anticipate –Replay) which is built on the idea that listening actually takes active work and it is not just a passive skill.

Halt– “[to] free your mind to pay attention to the person speaking”

Engage– “Focus on the speaker” by some sort of physical movement towards his/her direction

Anticipate–Actively think about what the speaker might share next

Replay–Review what the speaker is saying and try to make sense of commonalities, either independently or with peers

- By developing their ability to listen well we develop our students' ability to become more independent learners, as by hearing accurately they are much more likely to be able to reproduce accurately, refine their understanding of grammar and develop their own vocabulary.

Listening is an activity absorbing of the meanings of words and sentences by the brain. It leads to the understanding of facts and ideas, but listening takes attention, or sticking to the task at hand in spite of distractions. It requires concentration, which is the focusing of our thoughts upon one particular problem. A person who incorporates listening with concentration is actively listening. Active listening is a method of responding to another that encourages communication.

The importance of listening

- Communication is not complete without effective listening.
- An attentive listener stimulates better speaking by the speaker.
- A good listener learns more than an indifferent listener.
- A good listener can restructure vague speaking in a way that produces clearer meaning.
- Listening is the most important communication skill.
- We probably spend more time using our Listening Skills than any other kind of skill.
- Like other skills, Listening takes practice.
- Real Listening is an active process.
- Listening requires attention.
- A good listener learns to detect prejudices, assumptions and attitudes.

Communication plays a vital role in getting success in all fields. Language is used as a tool for communication. Perfect communication is not possible for people without using a language. Moreover, people cannot achieve their aims, objectives, and goals without using proper language to communicate. Therefore, there is a need for a language to communicate with others those who live all around the globe.

***How can we define speaking?**

Speaking is an interactive process of constructing meaning that involves producing and receiving and processing information. Its form and meaning are dependent on the context in which it occurs, including the participants themselves, their collective experiences, the physical environment, and the purposes for speaking.

The Importance of Speaking Skill

•The way we speak differs according to the situation we are in. We do not speak to our professors the same way we speak to our friends.

•Context is important, then. It defines the way we use language to communicate certain ideas to certain people.

•The purpose of talking also plays a role in the way we speak. If we are chatting to spend time it is different than lecturing to transfer information.

*Speaking skills are also useful for learners when they have to settle down well in their professions.

*The professionals have to give oral presentations as they have to promote the products or their companies or give training to the other colleagues. Furthermore, an effective speaker can inspire the audience a lot and gain the complete attention of the audience and maintain the same tempo until the end of his/her speech. So the audience involves completely in the speaker's speech and they sometimes forget the real world and put their complete concentration on the speech.

The main advantages of speaking skills are:

- To participate actively in pair or group activities in the classrooms.
- To give an impressive speech on different occasions.
- To participate actively in debates and group discussions.
- To pursue higher studies in foreign countries.
- To interact with people all around the globe.
- To promote the sale of products in the business.
- To make living abroad simpler and easier.
- To get better employment opportunities.
- To perform well in job interviews.
- To acquire more knowledge.
- To give presentations for all purposes.
- To communicate effectively with others.
- To boost up the speakers' self-confidence.
- To know the different cultures of the world.

How to teach LISTENING



'WE HAVE TWO EARS AND ONE MOUTH SO THAT WE CAN LISTEN TWICE AS MUCH AS WE SPEAK'
EPICTETUS



Percentage of daily communication...

Reading 3rd
16%

Listening 1st
45%

Speaking 2nd
30%

Writing 4th
9%

(Burely-Allen, 1995)

Strategies for listening with purpose

The study of listening is a specialist field and, like all specialist fields, there is some common terminology which might be unfamiliar or confusing.

Learning to recognize these terms will help you to understand and develop your learners' listening skills.

When we achieve a very good level of listening in a particular language, we often forget how sophisticated this skill really is! The terms we use to describe the processes of listening are called sub-skills and they include:

Sub-skill	Definition	Example from everyday life
Predicting	Thinking about what you are going to hear, based on what you know about the speaker, the topic and the context.	You are listening to your parents planning a family trip. You think about where you have been before and what your family like to do. You begin to imagine where you think the next trip will be!
Listening for gist	Understanding just the general topic of what you hear.	You are walking in a park and you overhear friends talking. One of them is talking about a recent family event. You don't notice or remember all the details or words , but it sounded like it was a very happy event.
Listening for key information	Identifying specific words or phrases in what you hear.	You are waiting at the train station, listening to the announcement with information about which platform to go to. You listen carefully because you don't want to go to the wrong platform and miss your train.
Listening for detailed understanding	Understanding the content of what you hear in depth, especially the opinions and attitudes of the speaker(s).	It's your birthday soon and you want to go to the cinema with your friends. You ask your friends which films they would like to see and listen carefully to what they say before you decide.

STRATEGIES OF LISTENING

What does effective listening involve?

Bottom-up versus top-down approaches to listening



The **bottom-up** model emphasises the decoding of the smallest units- phonemes and syllables- to lead us towards meaning.



The **top-down** model emphasises the use of background knowledge to predict content.

Our ability to match the sounds to the word is called **bottom-up processing**.

To understand what the speaker means when they use the word, we need to listen for more information, we need to know the context and co-text. This is called **top-down processing**.

Process	Definition	Example from everyday life
Bottom-up processing = recognising what you hear	Recognising small units (sounds), building them up into bigger units (words) and then bigger ones (phrases). Sometimes called 'decoding'.	You ask someone for an address and they tell you it's number 60. You accurately identify the sounds and stress of the word sixty and don't mishear it as <i>sixteen</i> .
Top-down processing = understanding what it means	Using context (knowledge of the world) and co-text (what the speaker has said so far) to help you understand words that are not clear.	You're watching a fashion programme on TV. You think you hear someone talking about <i>string, summer, autumn</i> and <i>winter</i> . You doubt that you heard the first word correctly – you're not sure if <i>string</i> is a word in English, but you know that <i>spring</i> is a word. And you know that it makes sense when talking about other seasons. You also know that in the world of fashion, clothing is often categorised by season. You use this knowledge to make an educated guess: the person probably said <i>spring</i> , not <i>string</i> .

Listening is the ability to identify and understand what others are saying. This involves understanding a speaker's accent or pronunciation, his grammar and his vocabulary, and grasping his meaning (Howatt and Dakin). An able listener is capable of doing these four things simultaneously.

Types of Listening

ATTENTIVE LISTENING – It involves paying attention to the words that are being spoken.

PRETENCE LISTENING – It involves more hearing than listening. It means pretending through facial expressions that one is listening when actually one is not.

SELECTIVE LISTENING – It involves selecting the desired part of the message and ignoring the undesired part of the message.

INTUITIVE LISTENING – It means listening through the intuitive mind by silencing the other forms of internal dialogues going on simultaneously.

DISCRIMINATIVE LISTENING – It involves identifying the difference between various sounds. It also enables one to differentiate between familiar and unfamiliar language.

COMPREHENSION LISTENING – It involves attaching meaning to what is being listened to. It may also include comprehending the non-verbal messages being conveyed by the speaker.

EVALUATIVE LISTENING – It involves evaluating and analyzing the message being received. It involves judging the acceptability of what is said depending on how logical one finds it to be.

WHY TEACH LISTENING?

- Students hear different accents and varieties.
- Listening helps students to acquire language subconsciously.
- Listening is a receptive skill.
- Education.
- Mass communication.

Barriers to Effective Listening

- Physical Barriers: Physiological Barriers
- People – Related Barriers: Psychological Barriers

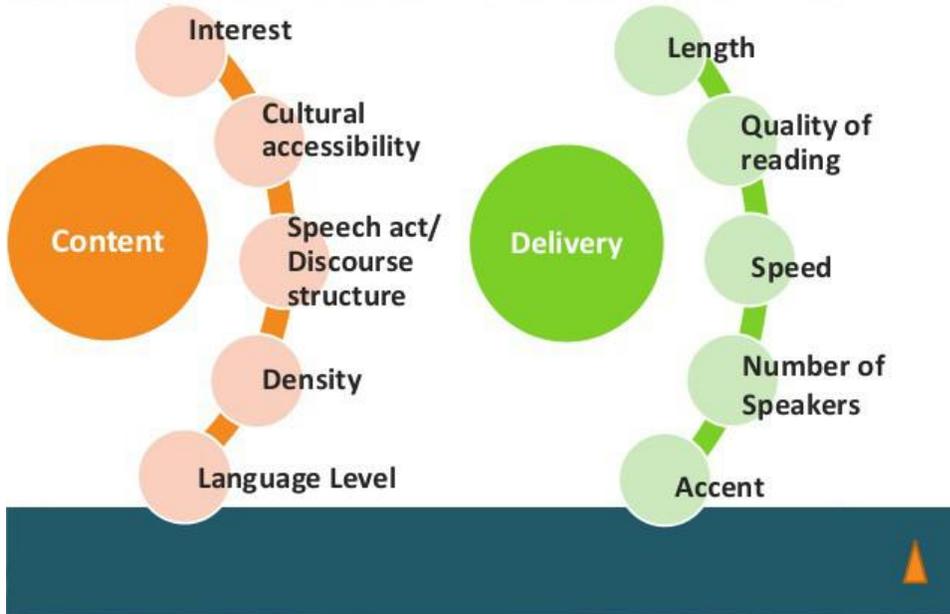
Physical Barriers: Physiological Barriers

- Noise
- Poor acoustics
- Defective mechanical devices
- Frequent interruptions
- Uncomfortable seating arrangements
- Uncomfortable environment
- Message overload

Physiological Barriers

- State of Health
- Disability
- Wandering attention
- Impatience
- Emotional blocks
- Being unsure of the speaker's ability
- Personal anxiety
- Attitude

What makes a good Listening Text?



Content

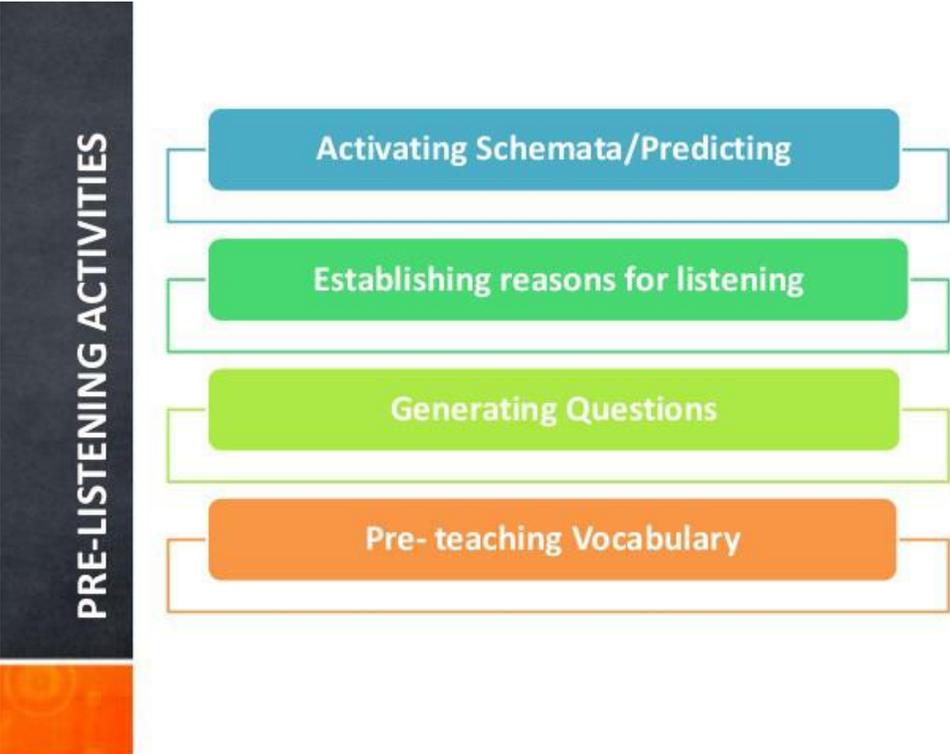
FEATURE	QUESTIONS TO ASK
Interest	Will this be interesting for my students?
Cultural accessibility	Will my students understand the context and ideas?
Speech act/ Discourse structure	Does it discuss abstract concepts or is it based on everyday transactions?
Density	Does the information come thick and fast or are there moments in which the listener can relax?
Language level	Is the majority of the vocabulary and grammar appropriate for my students?

FEATURE	QUESTIONS TO ASK
Length	Will I need to cut part of the recording because it is too long? Is it long enough?
Quality of recording	Is the recording clear? Will background noise affect comprehension?
Speed	Do the speakers talk too fast for my students?
Number of speakers	Are there many voices, potentially causing confusion?
Accent	Is the accent familiar? Is comprehensible?

TEACHING LISTENING SKILLS

Main Types of Listening Activities

- Pre listening activities
- While-listening activities
- Post-listening activities.



"Activating Schemata/Predicting":

Brainstorming

Visuals

Realia

Texts and words

Opinions, ideas and facts

"Establishing reasons for listening":

- Make the purpose realistic
- Make the goal achievable
- Get the students involved

"Generating Questions":

- Higher-order Questions
- Lower-order Questions
- Display Questions

Lower-order questions focusing on recall and comprehension, and higher-order questions requiring analysis, evaluation, and synthesis.

Display questions, a type of lower-order question, are used to check for understanding and elicit specific information.

Generating questions

Higher-order questions: Do you play touches on any contemporary issues?

Lower-order questions: Who does Macbeth kill first?

Display questions:

Teacher: What time is it, Denise?

Student: Two- thirty

Teacher: Very good, Denise!



The teacher is asking for a correct form rather than for any thought.



PRE- LISTENING:

- Tell your students “DON’T WORRY”
- Make sure students know what they are listening for before you start listening
- Give questions to check students’ comprehension
- Check for any words that your students may not know
- Short listening
- Stop the recording



WHILE LISTENING:

- Try to play the recording once for overall comprehension and then for specific details.
- Take notes (dates, places, people)
- Repeat the recording especially in the difficult parts

While - Listening

- The aim is to help learners listen for meaning
- Attention on listening itself

Show understanding by a physical response	Information transfer
Filling in gaps/blanks	Sequencing
Detecting differences or mistakes	Information search
Ticking off items (bingo)	Matching items

Marking/checking the items in pictures

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POST-LISTENING:

- Compare their notes in small groups.
- Encourage debates and answer questions.
- Write a summary of the main points and then compare.
- Make a list of any new vocabulary.

Post - Listening

- Allow learners to reflect on the language from the passage

Answering multiple-choice or true/false questions	Jigsaw listening
Problem solving activities	Writing letters, telegrams, postcards, messages, etc
Summarizing	Debates, interviews, discussions, role-plays, etc.

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JIGSAW

It is a teaching technique invented by social Psychologist

ELLIOT ARONSON in 1971. A cooperative learning method where students become experts on a specific part of a topic and then teach that information to their group members. It is a co-operative learning technique appropriate for students from 3rd to 12th grade. It is also used extensively in adult English second language ESL classes.

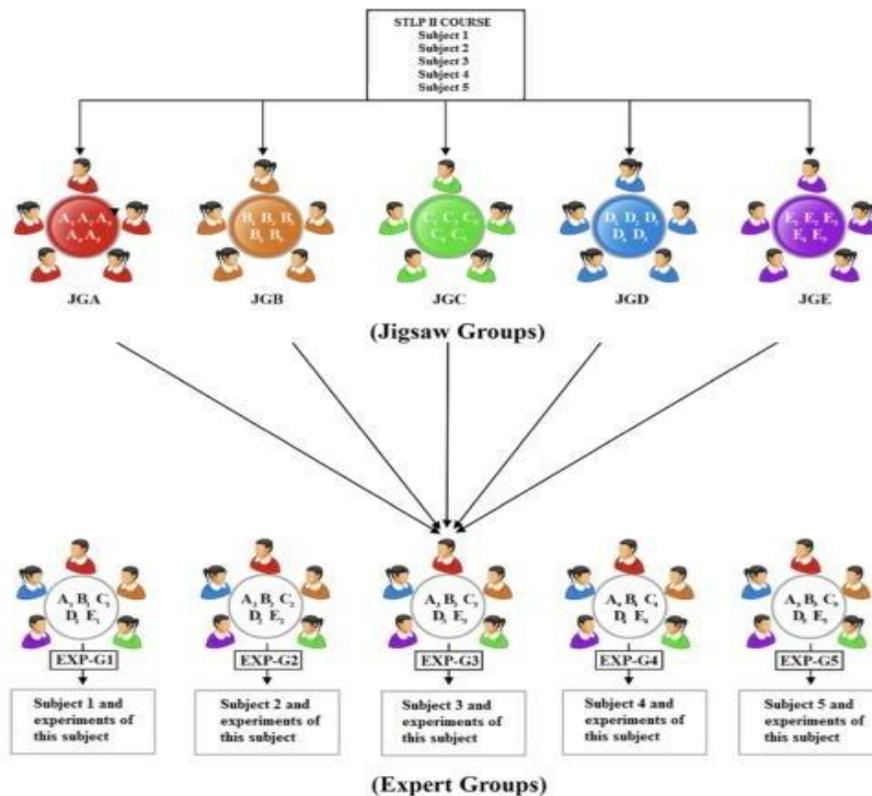
Listening

Engagement

Interaction

Peer teaching

Co-operation by giving each member of the group as essential part to play in the academic activity.



REMEMBER!!!

Try to use as many different sources of listening material as you can:

Advertisements, news programs, poetry, songs, extracts from plays, speeches, lectures, telephone conversations, informal dialogues.