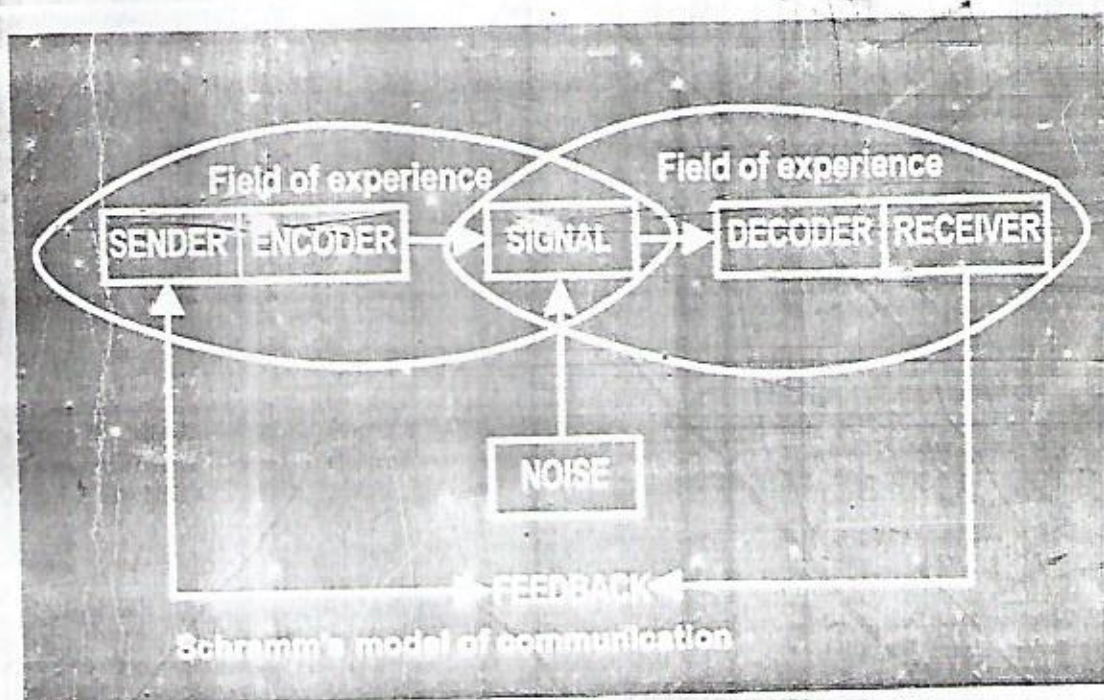


BASIC COMMUNICATION SKILLS

For
Students of Science
and Humanities



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&
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CONTENTS

Title Page	i
Copyright Page	iv
Contents	v
Acknowledgements	vi
Contributors	vii
Introduction	viii
Chapter One	
Word Structure in English	
<i>Mahfouz A. Adedimeji</i>	1
Chapter Two	
Parts of Speech	
<i>Iqbal A. Alabi</i>	22
Chapter Three	
Syntactic Units of English: Phrase, Clause and Sentence	
<i>Ide M. Olufade</i>	42
Chapter Four	
Concord and Punctuation	
<i>Mohammed S. Abdullahi-Idagbon</i>	59
Chapter Five	
Speaking Skills	
<i>Ahmed A. Joseph</i>	71
Chapter Six	
Listening Skills	
<i>Fanta F. Abraham</i>	83
Chapter Seven	
An Approach to Intensive and Extensive Reading	
<i>Abdullahi S. Abubakar</i>	100
Chapter Eight	
The Mastery of Comprehensive Skills	
<i>Patrick O. Balogun</i>	110
Chapter Nine	
Note-Making, Outlining and Summary Skills	
<i>Nola I. Babatunde</i>	125
Chapter Ten	
Essential of Essay and Letter Writing	
<i>Oyinkan Medubu</i>	138
Chapter Eleven	
Abbreviations and Symbols in Science and Humanities	
<i>Victoria A. Alabi</i>	155

Chapter Six

LISTENING SKILLS

Binta F. Ibrahim

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. However, 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 merely hearing 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. Hence, people say: "I hear you but cannot understand what you are saying". Hearing is, therefore, different from listening.

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 (1990:2) 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 sounds, but convey 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.

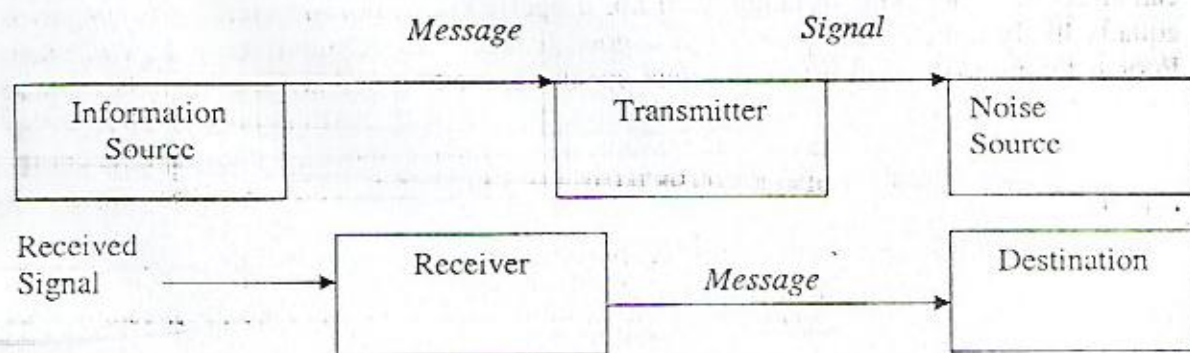


Fig. 1: Listening Communication Process

(Adapted from Rost (1990:2))

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 and meaningful ideas which appear similar perhaps in pronunciation and even

meaning 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 reproduction (if on loudspeakers), imperfectly planned speech, false starts, hesitation, speaker's variance in tempo of speech, clarity of articulation, regional accent, 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.

This chapter is aimed at examining the following aspects of the listening skills:

- (i) Meaning, Nature and Characteristics of Listening
- (ii) Types and Levels of Listening
- (iii) Purpose and Role of Listening in verbal Communication
- (iv) Listening Problems
- (v) Listening in the ESL (English as a Second Language) Class Situation
- (vi) Approaches/Strategies for Developing Effective Listening Ability
- (vii) Test of Listening with Graded Listening activities

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. 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 skill 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 (1987:10) 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

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 (1997:8) 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 utterances, which he hears, have to be processed for meaning. For instance, the word "Yes" in a complete context would mean total agreement and this carries a falling intonation, and "Yes" with a rising intonation will indicate a question, not total agreement, 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. You may demand for a "cup" and be served with "cup" for example.

TYPES AND LEVELS OF LISTENING

Tanka & Most (1985:17) 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 towards 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 expressions 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 situation is a concentration on the speaker's utterance as it relates to his emotional expression.

2. Appreciative Listening

This type of listening goes beyond merely 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. Consider listening to a poem, a song, a story, an argument, for instance. In them, certain words and their sequences e.g. wicked, innocent, portrait will suggest the tone, imagery, rhyme, mood and rhythm of the poem. The words are used to make 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 attempts while listening to associate ideas and receive other stimuli during the listening process and these can be reproduced after listening.

3. Analytical/Critical Listening

This involves to explicitly stated points and using the points and their content to arrive at other points in other discourse situations. This type of listening therefore requires that you 'weigh' what you hear and arrive at decisions based on your analytical judgment. Consider what you hear from most advertisements, for instance, and you will conclude that most are empty propaganda, e.g.

AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome) is a disease of the female youths.

The words 'female youths' can be questioned. How are the female youths determined? Is it the under-aged married female or the unmarried female of any age? Why can the male of any age and elderly female people not also have AIDS? Also, the following advertisement that we listen to, is not analytical, hence can also be criticized.

"Wise people bank with UBA".

The word "wise" could be queried. How are the 'wise' known? How does one define 'wise'? Why can't a fool also bank with UBA if he/she also has money? By the time you attempt answering all these questions, you are making your listening analytical.

Critical inquiry in listening, therefore, involves listening for speech habits, making use of aural environmental clues, selecting sounds and finding the combined meanings of these sounds. Here, the listener 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 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.

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, for instance, students listening to lectures, and writing down essential points, listening emphasis will be on the main ideas, the cause of a problem and possible solutions, accentuated by the lecturer on the lecture topic. Teachers' instruction, announcements, town criers' message, sermon by imams or preachers all belong to this listening category. Hence, listening for information process 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) Recognizing stated cause and effect relationships.

- (v) Tracing the sequence of events, actions, narrations, activities, etc.
- (vi) Recognizing the speaker's purpose
- (vii) Making 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 speakers organize their speech into thought units. These units are developed into topic sentences. It is the topic sentence, that provides the main points of the units of speech. Examine for instance, the main points in 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, M. F. (1973:16)

The main point of the extract is given in the opening sentence which is the topic sentence i.e., "leaves are very useful to man". It provides an overall organizing focus for the remaining sentences. Other statements provide supporting details about the uses of leaves. It reveals a subject matter i.e. the use of 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. For instance:

We might define engineering as the process of harnessing or directing the forces and materials of nature for the use and convenience of man. such a definition is by no means complete and exhaustive, but it is a good working definition because it emphasizes three major points that are critical 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, judgment, and elasticity of thinking.

Second, the words 'harnessing' or '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.

Trimble (1985:35)

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 judgment experimented in combination of actions. The conclusion is that engineering aims are man's comfort.

(2) Listening to Conversations

The listener can pick out specific points from conversations which involve exchange of views, ideas, opinions, feelings, etc. between two or among more persons. When these people converse, 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:

Dr: Please sit down.

Patient: Thank you, sir.

Dr: The stomach pain has been diagnosed as uterine growth.

Patient: Can we go over that again please?

I do not understand you.

Dr: You've just been diagnosed fibroids positive

I hope I am making myself clear?

Patient: This is even more confusing, sir.

Dr: Please take this note to the Doctor in the adjacent room.

Patient: What for, sir?

Dr: We are to get prepared for the surgical removal of your uterus which is the only prescription to your ailment. Hope you know that uterus is the same as womb?

A Patients' Medical
Record, (2nd July 2004)

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 what the listener listens to in conversations.

(3) Listening for Taking Direction

The purpose of listening here is that the listening aims at understanding the direction to a place. He/she may be asked to listen to a direction on how to get to another part of that country. He/she through listening to direction can trace the route as he/she

understand 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 in Lagos, the listener is expected to be able to visualize the directions vividly.

(4) Listening for Taking Instructions

The purpose of this is to pick information and act. This involves the extraction of the essential information on what to do. In this, the listener may not have understood the entire text or passage but must be able to point out the main ideas in the passage by eliminating the irrelevance in the texts as the case may be. The listener follows the instructions given about the text 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 Agriculture courses as well, this type of purpose of listening is more glaring. Descriptions aim at clarity. Things/situations, which we wish to describe, must be vivid pictures and the speaker likes to paint such pictures in words, accents, tone, colours, shape, and size 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 pile up a lot of action words in details and the listener aims at interpreting the speech based on these details.

(5) Listening for Inference

Here, the listener goes beyond what he/she has heard to deduce related meanings, opinions and views. Inference, therefore, plays a vital role in listening. The aim is listening beyond the speaker's utterance by making similar inferences from outside the text based on his 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 does the story tell us? (ii)
- (ii) What have we learnt from what happens in the story? (iii)
- (iii) How does the story relate to our practical experiences? (iv)

(6) Listening to Narration

Here, the narrator has a story to tell or an experience to share with the listener. The sequence of what happened is very important. Events are sometimes stated in chronological order. Narration also involves action and these actions are sequential. It aids comprehension, interpretation and judgment. For instance, listen to the text below read to you by someone and attempt to answer the questions that follow it:

human beings are complex creatures. 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 place 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 their 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 moment of understanding. Through such writings, readers may sharpen their own self-portraits.

(Adapted from Carlsen, G. R. & Gilbert, N. (eds.) 1985:644).

Comments

The text has shown that to "know thyself" is not a simple process. It is a continuing challenge that deepens and broadens as one moves 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 decisions 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 the 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.

Questions

- (i) What is the appropriate title for this text?
- (ii) What are the sources of the pictures of ourselves?
- (iii) What is the theme of the text?
- (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 behaviour
 - (c) Self knowledge gives a person confidence in crisis situation
 - (d) Knowing oneself is an impossible task.

(7) **Listening to Exposition**

The ability to differentiate features peculiar to various texts will help the listener to very quickly 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 illustrate meaning so that the meaning can be very clear to the listener. Expositions are therefore illustrative and extended definitions. Examples of causes of diseases could be said to be disorders, infections, malnutrition, etc. Listen to the following detailed exposition on soil and note the explanation given in the minutest detail to illustrate very clearly the characteristics and stages of soil.

Soil physicists have characterized the drying of a soil in three stages. They are: the 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.

Adapted from Trimble (1985:47)

(8) **Listening to Argument**

An Argument involves giving a reason or reasons to support to disapprove something. It presents two ways of looking at 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, we are engineers better than doctors who cure them? Note for further example that the following extract on metals gives a line of argument.

Why does man use metals still so much today when there are other materials, especially, plastics, which are available? A material is generally used because it offers the required strength, and 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 depend 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 objects 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 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 metal 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 built, a material was needed which could withstand extreme aerodynamic conditions and would have a life of at least 45,000 flying hours. To achieve this, 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.

Extracted from Johnson (1988:131)

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

(9) 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 deduces the manner 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 labour 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 repletion. She/he must be able to mollify the speaker's temporary predictions.

(10) Listening to an Advertisement

In an advertisement, the speaker does not identify himself before moving to the main business of promoting either a factory, an establishment, particular goods or commodity. He uses persuasive and positive language here, supports these with concrete evidence, all of which the listener must be attentive to. Once a listener does not understand the language of the discourse, he will miss out the type, level, role and purpose.

LISTENING PROBLEMS

Most Nigerian languages make use of tone to distinguish one word from the other. These languages also stress every syllable 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 intonations for the same utterance would change the meaning of the word.

Listening may be impeded as a result of psychological, physical, natural and environmental factors. In the first place, if the physical environment where listening task takes place is not conducive for 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 heard or understood. Movement and sounds of people or object is not conducive for effective learning. Such movements will distract the flowing thought of the speaker and the attention of the listener. A tranquil environment aids concentration. In addition to this, some listeners 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. 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. 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. 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. Clarity and simplicity of what is being listened to, is of importance. The speed of the material being read is also important to the listening process.

LISTENING IN THE ESL (ENGLISH AS SECOND LANGUAGE) CLASSROOM SITUATION

Lubega (1987:174) observes that: As a result of its abstractness, listening skill is perhaps the hardest skill out of the four communicative skill 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 Second 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 out of what the speaker is saying. One may pay attention, yet may not listen properly, because of some unpleasant mood, distractive noise, use of language or difficult diction, inability to distinguish sounds (minimal pairs) and similar words for example.

As a language user and learner, be interested in all forms of oral discourse. Try listening all the time. As Doctors, Counsellors, Engineers, Agriculturalists, Language Specialists, religious Leaders, Scientists and Computer Operators all should know that listening 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 their problems and achieve their aims. The way the speaker with whom you have to necessarily relate says things and how he moves and behaves will aid your listening ability. Lack of mastery of listening skills will render imperfect the reciprocity which characterizes listening and speaking situations.

TEST OF LISTENING

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

Activity I

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

- (i) We can hear sounds 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 were 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?

Adapted from Trimble (1985:52)

- (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?
3. Who is not (pre'sent, 'present)?
4. The (re'fuse, 'refuse) disposal an has broken down
5. I can't take (in'sult, 'insult) from anybody.
6. Who will help us (ex'tract, 'extract) the important points from that long passage?
7. Why do you (re'bel, 'rebel) against the authority?
8. He has been provided with an (es'cort, 'escort)
9. I did not believe that my interest could (con'flict, 'conflict) with yours
10. You need a sihing (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 periods, decide which of the four options offered closely represents what you have read.

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

ANS:.....

Yisa can run like a bit, sing like a bird, and 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. Animat drinks only well water because she thinks it tastes good

- (a) Animat cannot taste very well
- (b) Animat drinks anything that tastes good
- (c) Animat likes the flavour of water from a well
- (d) Animat 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 seat in queue a long time
- (d) We arrived 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 application.

- (a) Irrigation helps rain to wet the farm land
- (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 iodined 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 goitre
- (c) Akin has goitre because he doesn't take iodine contained food
- (d) Food containing iodine can stop Akin contacting goitre.

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

ANS:.....

CONCLUSION

Listeners must first and foremost develop auditory discrimination among sounds, tones, stresses intonations, words and sentences. Auditory discrimination is an important aspect of listening. This is for the fact that it aids general comprehension of listening types, purpose, processes and aims all of which have been discussed in this chapter. Listeners must develop good listening habits to be able to catch required information at the right time it is given so as to be able to respond appropriately.

In this unit, you have learnt:

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

Out of the four skills of language viz listening, speaking, reading and writing, listening is the most primary. From general observation, we spend more time in listening than in other language skills, hence, 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 toward listening in order to deduce information, analyze, and effectively appreciate a text.

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

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) Pains 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

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

Activity III

1. 'convert
2. con'vict
3. 'present
4. 'refuse
5. 'insult
6. ex'tract
7. re'bel
8. con'flict
9. 'permit

Activity IV

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

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