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THE IMPORTANCE OF LISTENING TO LEARN ENGLISH LANGUAGE

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ABSTRACT

Today's world , where we live in day by day more and more people try to learn English language very well , because given language is key to not only study , but also work both new technologies and communication . Given article it is focused that how to improve listening section , as listening is very essential part of English language in order speak as well as listen something . There are beneficial ways to develop listening part . Besides that , following article there are much information about listening importance .

1. Introduction

“Are you listening to me?” This question is often asked because the speaker thinks the listener is nodding off or daydreaming. We sometimes think that listening means we only have to sit back, stay barely awake, and let a speaker's words wash over us. While many Americans look upon being active as something to admire, to engage in, and to excel at, listening is often understood as a “passive” activity. More recently, *O, the Oprah Magazine* featured a cover article with the title, “How to Talk So People *Really* Listen: Four Ways to Make Yourself Heard.” This title leads us to expect a list of ways to leave the listening to others and insist that they do so, but the article contains a surprise ending. The final piece of advice is this: “You can't go wrong by showing interest in what other people say and making them feel important. In other words, the better *you* listen, the more you'll be listened to.” Jarvis, T. (2009, November). How to talk so people *really* listen: Four ways to make yourself heard. *O, the Oprah Magazine*.

2. Main Body

You may have heard the adage, “We have two ears but only one mouth”—an easy way to remember that listening can be twice as important as talking. As a student, you most likely spend many hours in a classroom doing a large amount of focused listening, yet sometimes it is difficult to apply those efforts to communication in other areas of your life. As a result, your listening skills may not be all they could be. In this chapter, we will

examine listening versus hearing, listening styles, listening difficulties, listening stages, and listening critically.

Listening or Hearing

Hearing is an accidental and automatic brain response to sound that requires no effort. We are surrounded by sounds most of the time. For example, we are accustomed to the sounds of airplanes, lawn mowers, furnace blowers, the rattling of pots and pans, and so on. We hear those incidental sounds and, unless we have a reason to do otherwise, we train ourselves to ignore them. We learn to filter out sounds that mean little to us, just as we choose to hear our ringing cell phones and other sounds that are more important to us.

Listening, on the other hand, is purposeful and focused rather than accidental. As a result, it requires motivation and effort. Listening, at its best, is active, focused, concentrated attention for the purpose of understanding the meanings expressed by a speaker. We do not always listen at our best, however, and later in this chapter we will examine some of the reasons why and some strategies for becoming more active critical listeners.

Benefits of Listening

Listening should not be taken for granted. Before the invention of writing, people conveyed virtually all knowledge through some combination of showing and telling. Elders recited tribal histories to attentive audiences. Listeners received religious teachings enthusiastically. Myths, legends, folktales, and stories for entertainment survived only because audiences were eager to listen. Nowadays, however, you can gain information and entertainment through reading and electronic recordings rather than through real-time listening. If you become distracted and let your attention wander, you can go back and replay a recording. Despite that fact, you can still gain at least four compelling benefits by becoming more active and competent at real-time listening.

You Become a Better Student

When you focus on the material presented in a classroom, you will be able to identify not only the words used in a lecture but their emphasis and their more complex meanings. You will take better notes, and you will more accurately remember the instructor's claims, information, and conclusions. Many times, instructors give verbal cues about what information is important, specific expectations about assignments, and even what material is likely to be on an exam, so careful listening can be beneficial.

You Become a Better Friend

When you give your best attention to people expressing thoughts and experiences that are important to them, those individuals are likely to see you as someone who cares about their well-being. This fact is especially true when you give your attention only and refrain from interjecting opinions, judgments, and advice.

People Will Perceive You as Intelligent and Perceptive

When you listen well to others, you reveal yourself as being curious and interested in people and events. In addition, your ability to understand the meanings of what you hear will make you a more knowledgeable and thoughtful person.

Good Listening Can Help Your Public Speaking

When you listen well to others, you start to pick up more on the stylistic components related to how people form arguments and present information. As a result, you have the ability to analyze what you think works and doesn't work in others' speeches, which can help you transform your speeches in the process. For example, really paying attention to how others cite sources orally during their speeches may give you ideas about how to more effectively cite sources in your presentation.

Hearing is the physical ability, while listening is a skill. Listening skills allow one to make sense of and understand what another person is saying. In other words, listening skills allow people to understand what someone is talking about—the meaning behind the words.

Good listening skills make workers more productive. The ability to listen carefully allows workers to better understand assignments they are given. They are able to understand what is expected of them by their management. Active **listening** promotes mindful thinking, which can reduce anxiety and depression in **students**

It can also help **students** build relationships because as they engage themselves in conversation, their peers are more likely to view them as open and interested

Related. Verbal communication involves both speaking and **listening**. In a **business** organization, **listening** is key to effective working relationships among employees and between management and staff. **Listening skills** also impact a company's interaction with customers and other **businesses**.

First, effective **listening** can help you become a better **student**. Second, effective **listening** can help you become more effective in **your** interpersonal relationships. Third, effective **listening** can lead others to perceive you as more intelligent. Lastly, effective **listening** can help you become a stronger public speaker.

Listening is vital in the **language** classroom because it provides input for the **learner**. Without understanding input at the right level, any **learning** simply cannot begin. They hear is an impetus, not an obstacle, to interaction and **learning**.

There are **four different types of listening** that are essential to know when deciding what your goal as the listener is. The **four types of listening** are appreciative, empathic, comprehensive, and critical.

In today's high-tech, high-speed, high-stress world, communication is more important than ever, yet we seem to devote less and less time to really listening to one another. Genuine listening has become a rare gift—the gift of time. It helps build relationships, solve problems, ensure understanding, resolve conflicts, and improve accuracy. At work, effective listening means fewer errors and less wasted time. At home, it helps develop resourceful, self-reliant kids who can solve their own problems. Listening builds friendships and careers. It saves money and marriages.

Listening is the ability to accurately receive and interpret messages in the communication process.

Listening is key to all effective communication. Without the ability to listen effectively, messages are easily misunderstood. As a result, communication breaks down and the sender of the message can easily become frustrated or irritated.

If there is one communication skill you should aim to master, then listening is it.

Listening is so important that many top employers provide listening skills training for their employees. This is not surprising when you consider that good listening skills can lead to better customer satisfaction, greater productivity with fewer mistakes, and increased sharing of information that in turn can lead to more creative and innovative work.

Good listening skills also have benefits in our personal lives, including:

A greater number of friends and social networks, improved self-esteem and confidence, higher grades at school and in academic work, and even better health and general well-being.

Studies have shown that, whereas speaking raises blood pressure, attentive listening can bring it down.

Listening is Not the Same as Hearing

Hearing refers to the sounds that enter your ears. It is a physical process that, provided you do not have any hearing problems, happens automatically.

Listening, however, requires more than that: it requires focus and concentrated effort, both mental and sometimes physical as well.

Listening means paying attention not only to the story, but how it is told, the use of language and voice, and how the other person uses his or her body. In other words, it means being aware of both verbal and non-verbal messages. Your ability to listen effectively depends on the degree to which you perceive and understand these messages.

Listening is not a passive process. In fact, the listener can, and should, be at least as engaged in the process as the speaker. The phrase '*active listening*' is used to describe this process of being fully involved.

We Spend a lot of Time Listening

Adults spend an average of 70% of their time engaged in some sort of communication.

Of this, research shows that an average of 45% is spent listening compared to 30% speaking, 16% reading and 9% writing. (Adler, R. et al. 2001). That is, by any standards, a lot of time listening. It is worthwhile, therefore, taking a bit of extra time to ensure that you listen effectively.

The Purpose of Listening

There is no doubt that effective listening is an extremely important life skill. Why is listening so important?

Listening serves a number of possible purposes, and the purpose of listening will depend on the situation and the nature of the communication.

To specifically focus on the messages being communicated, avoiding distractions and preconceptions.

To gain a full and accurate understanding into the speakers point of view and ideas.

To critically assess what is being said. (See our page on **Critical Thinking** for more).

To observe the **non-verbal signals** accompanying what is being said to enhance understanding.

To show interest, concern and concentration.

To encourage the speaker to communicate fully, openly and honestly.

To develop an selflessness approach, putting the speaker first.

To arrive at a shared and agreed understanding and acceptance of both sides views.

Often our main concern while listening is to formulate ways to respond. This is not a function of listening. We should try to focus fully on what is being said and how it's being said in order to more fully understand the speaker.

Barriers to Effective Listening

To improve the process of effective listening, it can be helpful to turn the problem on its head and look at barriers to effective listening, or ineffective listening.

For example, one common problem is that instead of listening closely to what someone is saying, we often get distracted after a sentence or two and instead start to think about what we are going to say in reply or think about unrelated things. This means that we do not fully listen to the rest of the speaker's message.

This problem is attributed, in part, to the difference between average speech rate and average processing rate. Average speech rates are between 125 and 175 words a minute whereas we can process on average between 400 and 800 words a minute. It is a common habit for the listener to use the spare time while listening to daydream or think about other things, rather than focusing on what the speaker is saying.

Of course the clarity of what the speaker is saying can also affect how well we listen. Generally we find it easier to focus if the speaker is fluent in their speech, has a familiar accent, and speaks at an appropriate loudness for the situation. It is more difficult, for example, to focus on somebody who is speaking very fast and very quietly, especially if they are conveying complex information.

We may also get distracted by the speaker's personal appearance or by what someone else is saying, which sounds more interesting.

These issues not only affect you, but you are likely to show your lack of attention in your body language.

Generally, we find it much harder to control our body language, and you are likely to show your distraction and/or lack of interest by lack of eye contact, or posture. The speaker will detect the problem, and probably stop talking at best. At worst, they may be very offended or upset.

The way to improve your listening skills is to practice "active listening." This is where you make a conscious effort to hear not only the words that another person is saying but, more importantly, the **complete message** being communicated.

In order to do this you must pay attention to the other person very carefully. You cannot allow yourself to become distracted by whatever else may be going on around you, or by forming counter arguments while the other person is still speaking. Nor can you allow yourself to get bored, and lose focus on what the other person is saying.

"Adopt the pace of nature, her secret is patience" - Ralph Waldo Emerson¹

Let's talk about several ways in order to develop listening skill

1. Choose Comprehensible Input

The most important thing you must do when looking to improve your listening skills is **listen to material that you already mostly understand**.

This kind of material, known as "comprehensible input", is any audio content that's slightly above your current skill level.

Everyone's level is slightly different, so this is hard to quantify in objective terms; however, I would say that comprehensible input is any audio source that you can already understand at least 60%-80% of.

It may seem counter-intuitive to listen to material that is just above your skill level, but it is actually extremely important.

This is because if you listen to things that you mostly don't understand, you'll spend the majority of your time frustrated and confused. You may decipher a few words here and there, but you will struggle to piece together the gist of what is happening.

This is what was happening to Alex. He really wanted to understand movies, podcasts, and online videos, so that's what he tried to listen to. However, these native-level materials were so far above his level that they only slowed his progress, instead of supporting it.

To reach the kind of high level that Alex aspired to, it is necessary to build a "ladder" of comprehensible input. Start with what you understand, and then gradually listen to harder and harder audio materials as your level increases.

For example, this is why I always have my students begin learning with a solid listening and reading routine. It's the best method I've found for improving listening skills from day one of your learning.

Once students have that routine in place, they can then move on to more difficult activities that involve listening only, among other things.

2. Pay Attention

Give the speaker your undivided attention, and acknowledge the message. Recognize that non-verbal communication also "speaks" loudly.

Look at the speaker directly.

Put aside distracting thoughts.

Don't mentally prepare a rebuttal!

Avoid being distracted by environmental factors. For example, side conversations.

"Listen" to the speaker's **body language**

3. Listen to What You Enjoy

Understanding most of what you listen to is the fundamental step to improving your skills. Once you have that in place, you then need to decide exactly what kinds of comprehensible content you will practice with.

While you technically could listen to anything that meets that 60%-80% comprehensibility standard, **you ideally want to choose materials that are relevant and interesting to you as a person**.

This is important because relevant and interesting materials will always be more enjoyable to listen to compared to other resources. If you enjoy what you listen to, you will have more motivation to continue listening, and be more resistant to stopping, or losing focus.

In real terms, this means that you should be very picky about what you do and do not use as a listening resource.

Just because your textbook has a lengthy audio dialogue about going to the airport or going shopping at the mall, you shouldn't feel obligated to listen to them. Be selective, and make sure that most of your practice time is spent with audio materials that you look forward to listening to, and match up well with your goals and interests.

4 . Keep an open mind.

Listen without judging the other person or mentally criticizing the things she tells you. If what she says alarms you, go ahead and feel alarmed, but don't say to yourself, "Well, that was a stupid move." As soon as you indulge in judgmental bemusements, you've compromised your effectiveness as a listener.

Listen without jumping to conclusions. Remember that the speaker is using language to represent the thoughts and feelings inside her brain. You don't know what those thoughts and feelings are and the only way you'll find out is by listening.

Don't be a sentence-grabber. Occasionally my partner can't slow his mental pace enough to listen effectively, so he tries to speed up mine by interrupting and finishing my sentences. This usually lands him way off base, because he is following his own train of thought and doesn't learn where my thoughts are headed. After a couple of rounds of this, I usually ask, "Do you want to have this conversation by yourself, or do you want to hear what I have to say?" I wouldn't do that with everyone, but it works with him.

5. Active listening

Active listening shows the speaker that you're interested and is an important business communication skill. Using active listening techniques helps to ensure that you correctly understand what is said.

Active listening techniques:

Paraphrasing back to the speaker what was said, to show understanding

Nonverbal cues (nodding, eye contact, etc.)

Verbal affirmations ("I understand," "I know," "Thank you," etc.)

Demonstrating concern and establishing rapport

6. Just listen!

Create a mental model of the information, whether it be a picture or an arrangement of abstract concepts. Listen to keywords and phrases and do not rehearse what you are going to say after the speaker is done talking. Think about what the other person is saying rather than what you are going to respond with. It is difficult to think of what you are going to say while also listening to the speaker. Be attentive and relaxed – don't get distracted by your own thoughts and feelings.

7. Listen to the words and try to picture what the speaker is saying.

Allow your mind to create a mental model of the information being communicated. Whether a literal picture, or an arrangement of abstract concepts, your brain will do the necessary work if you stay focused, with

senses fully alert. When listening for long stretches, concentrate on, and remember, key words and phrases.

When it's your turn to listen, don't spend the time planning what to say next. You can't rehearse and listen at the same time. Think only about what the other person is saying.

Finally, concentrate on what is being said, even if it bores you. If your thoughts start to wander, immediately force yourself to refocus.

8 . Listen and Re-listen at Different Speeds

If beginner learners of any language can agree on one thing, it's this: language spoken at native speed is *fast*.

Native speakers speak so quickly and fluently that learners often don't have the time to mentally break down the sounds, words, and meaning of what they're hearing—and even if they do manage it, the native speaker is usually on a whole other topic by then.

To be able to listen to native speakers at normal speed, you can't just dive in head first and listen at full speed right away. Speed, like vocabulary, plays a factor in comprehensible input. Because of this, you will likely need to listen at slower, more comprehensible speeds first, before you can gradually ramp things up to native speed.

Now, there are a couple of ways to do this:

- When speaking to one or more native speakers, you can just politely ask them to slow down when they speak to you, or repeat certain details slowly.
- When listening to a recording, you can play it back at a variety of speeds, including 0.25x speed and 0.5x speed. The availability of playback options depends on which media player you are using, but free resources like YouTube, Audacity, and VLC media player all allow these kinds of speed adjustments.

Of these options, the second is usually most convenient for learning. Simply take any audio file, and adjust the playback speed until you can understand what is being said. Listen to it a few times at the slower speed, and then bump the speed up step by step until you reach native speed again.

9 . Learn Actively by Taking Notes

As learners, it is easy to view listening as an exclusively passive activity. Unlike speaking, reading, and writing, you don't really need to do anything at all to listen; you just need to be within earshot, and the sounds will enter your ears on their own.

The passive quality of listening is great for when you just want to sit back, relax, and listen to a piece of music or dialogue in a movie. It is not so great, however, for productive learning sessions.

You see, learning happens best when it is active—when you, the learner, are engaged in what you are doing and take action to process new information. If learning is not active, you will absorb less information, and even run the risk of forgetting what you learned quickly.

To get the maximal value from your listening activities, you need to turn passive listening into active listening, which will greatly increase your comprehension and retention rates. One of the best ways to do this is through **taking notes while listening**.

When working on your listening skills, take out a notebook or piece of paper, and do the following:

- Write down the topic of the audio
- If there are multiple speakers, write down their names, or come up with labels for each (e.g. Speaker 1, Speaker 2)
- Write down the gist of what each speaker says, including any main points they try to communicate
- If you frequently hear a word you do not understand, try to write it down so you can look it up later
- If there's a word or sentence you find interesting, write it down so that you can practice using it in your own conversations.

By listening and taking notes at the same time, you will be much more interested and engaged in the audio content, and, as a result, you will learn in a much more organized and efficient way.

10. Wait for the speaker to pause to ask clarifying questions.

When you don't understand something, of course you should ask the speaker to explain it to you. But rather than interrupt, wait until the speaker pauses. Then say something like, "Back up a second. I didn't understand what you just said about..."

11. Ask questions only to ensure understanding.

At lunch, a colleague is excitedly telling you about her trip to Vermont and all the wonderful things she did and saw. In the course of this chronicle, she mentions that she spent some time with a mutual friend. You jump in with, "Oh, I haven't heard from Alice in ages. How is she?" and, just like that, discussion shifts to Alice and her divorce, and the poor kids, which leads to a comparison of custody laws, and before you know it an hour is gone and Vermont is a distant memory.

This particular conversational affront happens all the time. Our questions lead people in directions that have nothing to do with where *they* thought they were going. Sometimes we work our way back to the original topic, but very often we don't.

When you notice that your question has led the speaker astray, take responsibility for getting the conversation back on track by saying something like, "It was great to hear about Alice, but tell me more about your adventure in Vermont."

12. Try to feel what the speaker is feeling.

If you feel sad when the person with whom you are talking expresses sadness, joyful when she expresses joy, fearful when she describes her fears—and convey those feelings through your facial expressions and words—then your effectiveness as a listener is assured. Empathy is the heart and soul of good listening.

To experience empathy, you have to put yourself in the other person's place and allow yourself to feel what it is like to *be her* at that moment. This is not an easy thing to do. It takes energy and concentration. But it is a generous and helpful thing to do, and it facilitates communication like nothing else does.

13. Vary Your Listening Routine

For any language learning routine to be successful, it needs to keep you interested. For long-term success, you need to be engaged in a variety of different activities that challenge you and make you want to keep learning, day after day.

Your listening routine, which is a vital part of your overall daily learning routine, should be frequently changed, mixed-up, and varied in much the same way.

Even if you like playing back language audio while sitting at your desk, don't do that all the time. Try to listen to your target language at other places and times as well.

This can include **listening while**:

- Reading a transcript of the audio
- Doing household chores
- You're commuting to and from work
- Exercising
- Listening to target language music

Conclusion

Listening is very important to learn language and understand it. Guven article there fully information how to improve it.

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