

Employment Communication- A Lab Based Course
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Lecture – 13
Listening Skills – Introduction

So, hi friends we are back again and we are today, going to do a very important topic which is listening skills. We have a two lecturers actually today 13 and 14 and the first one is here for you Listening Skills - Introduction.

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Listening and critical thinking

CONCEPTS COVERED

- Listening and Communication
- Feedback: A prerequisite for effective listening
- The role of critical thinking: Assessing the credibility of what you listen to
- Technology's influence on listening and thinking
- Increasing your ear power: A program for effective listening
- Summary

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So, let us have brief glance at what we will be discussing today with you, we will be trying to integrate, listening and communication and important links between them. And we will develop further on feedback which is a prerequisite for effective listening. If you go back to your initial lectures there is this term mentioned- feedback in the communication loop. And it is that stage where listening is involved. Number 3, in fact, we are going to do more than listening, we are going to think of listening, as, we are going to imagine listening as critical thinking. And initially what I would like to say you now is that listening is not simply hearing with the ears, but it is critical thinking, more when we move forward. 4th we will examine the influence of technology on listening and thinking, 5th there will be a program or a suggestion how you can increase your ear

power and be a better listener and we will conclude with a summary of what we have in fact, covered.

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So, at the outset I would like to present to you the Chinese character for listening, and if you examine this at least for those of us who know Chinese, the idea is that you have here the symbol for the ear- the Chinese character for the ear. You have here the symbol for the eyes and you have here the symbol for the heart. And this is the most important point undivided attention. The Chinese character for listening therefore, says that listening involves all the 3 not simply the ear, but the ear along with the eyes that is what you are seeing and heart that is what you are feeling or undergoing, what are your emotions at the time of listening.

An undivided attention between these three first is ear, second eye and third heart this is the Chinese character for listening. So in fact, you remember the Chinese game we have played in the lab class on listening, the Chinese game of the Chinese whisper. The idea is that you can be a better listener if you give undivided attention, if your entire focus is on three elements the ear, the eyes and the heart.

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Listening and communication

- Listening affects all kinds of communication
- The ethics of Listening
 1. How responsive a listener are you?
 2. Are you prepared to listen?
 3. How well do you use your listening time?
 4. How much of a role do you play in ensuring the integrity of a message?
 5. Are you ready to collaborate with the speaker?

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So, let us communicate and think about listening and communication. In fact, if you think about the four communication skills listening, speaking, reading, writing, listening is that which affects all kinds of communication the rest of the three, it has been called the mother of speaking. It is so, important that speaking begins with listening. And if you have listened carefully you will also be a good speaker and in a chain like reaction you will be a better reader and writer as well.

Now let us come to the ethics of listening .The idea of becoming a good listener will spring from the following 5 points; if you are ethically committed to becoming a good listener. If you want seriously speaking, honestly speaking to be a good listener there would be this questions you need to consider: are you a responsive other than a responsive listener? Number 2: Do you have patience, are you prepared to listen or do you jump in, butt in, interrupt, disrupt, no patience at all? Number 3 as far as you have been listening how sincere and conscientious have you been? Number 4 what is your role in ensuring the integrity of a message? Because, as we have seen in the game of the Chinese whisper what happens is that the message tapers down, the message becomes less in value. So, what is your role in ensuring the integrity, the originality of the message which was meant for you to listen? Number 5 are you ready to collaborate with the speaker? Because you see this listening is not one part or one sided activity; listening and speaking compliment each other they make a whole. And therefore, the idea that you

have to collaborate with the speaker: if you are interested, if you are ethically committed to become a good listener.

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Listening and communication

- Listening versus Hearing
 1. Hearing—involuntary, physiological process by which we process sound
 2. Listening—deliberate psychological process by which we receive, understand, and retain aural stimuli

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So, let us first of all think about what I had made a slight mention of just few minutes ago, that there is a difference between listening and hearing. I had said that hearing is simply using your ears. But listening is the vaster, deeper and a more important, more complicated process. The first definition is that of hearing and it is involuntary you see you do not have to put some ear plugs and say that I will voluntary not listen you will still listen. You can reduce the amount of the sounds which go to your ear, but you cannot stop listening. Number 2 hearing is a physiological process by which we process sound. Physiological because these 2 ears belong to your human physiology or your physiognomy and the body or this organism the human being the homo-sapiens sapiens uses hearing or hearing is this physiological process by which you are processing this sound symbols which are entering your ears.

On the other hand if you look at the definition of listening, listening is deliberate; it involves willpower, commitment and your ethical interest in the matter what you are about to listen to. It is deliberate to psychological process. So, you see the difference first is involuntary, but listening is deliberate, the first one is physiological and this is psychological; so, it depends on what you have in your mind and how you using your mental processes to be a good listener. In other words let us once again define listening is

a deliberate psychological process by which we receive, understand and lastly retain, that is remember the oral stimuli.

The oral stimuli are simply the sound or the sound symbols which are entering your ears. So, that being made clear that there is a difference between listening and hearing and not a superficial difference it is quite important to remember the difference. Because, it is it will form the basis of your understanding and interaction with others based on how you know now that the difference between listening and hearing.

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Listening and communication

- Types of Listening
 1. Appreciative—for pleasure or relaxation
 2. Comprehensive—to gain knowledge
 3. Critical—to determine accuracy
 4. Emphatic—to understand feelings

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Now, what are the types of listening we have been acknowledged to be using? The first is appreciative listening or it is that which is used for pleasure and relaxation. Imagine a farmer he is ploughing the field and he has the radio on his temporary *charpoy* or bed under the tree where his food and water is also there. And maybe a dog is also waiting there and he switches on *Vividh Bharti* or All India Radio or *Akashvani* and that while he is ploughing the field and doing his other farmer related agricultural chores and activities he is listening to music.

Number 2 is comprehensive; the purpose being to gain knowledge this is the kind of listening you do as students when you listen to a lecture to gain knowledge your purpose being to gain knowledge and to understand the concepts or whatever is being taught in the class.

The 3rd is critical listening this is that it is let us say specifically if you can give an example it is that which is done by a judge or a lawyer. So, they indulge in critical thinking in special type of critical thinking, because, they are in such grave, serious, you know chair, seat, power of authority that they have to determine the accuracy of what they hear. Because their judgment will decide the fate or the career of a one or the other of the two parties involved in the court case and the 4th is emphatic. Emphatic listening emphatic listening is suppose you go to somebody's house where there has been a demise or a recent death. And of course, the other who has been the loser who has lost somebody near and dear to him or her will be sharing many thoughts, many words, many episodes, instances how in fact the demise was untimely, unexpected and how would the person who died was.

So, you have to do emphatic listening at that point of time because your attempt is to understand the feelings of your friend and so, that you can be in a better position to console him or her. Emphatic comes from empathy.

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Listening and communication

- Stages of Listening: More than meets the ear (Hurier Model)
 1. Hearing
 2. Understanding
 3. Remembering
 4. Interpreting
 5. Evaluating
 6. Responding

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So, then let us come to what are the stages of listening, because as we said it is not simply using your 2 ears its more than what meets the ears and not the eyes. And here we have for you we have to present you the Hurier model H U R I E R. Now this is simply a mnemonic and it is meant to make you understand the various stages of listening which are 6 in number.

1 hearing; that is simply using the ears and the sound symbols enter your ears because, the ears have been physiologically or biologically being made such by the created at maximum of the sound can enter and minimum of the sound can escape from out of the ear. If you remember as students of sciences at plus 2 and plus 10 level basic biology; you remember the cross section of the ear and you see that it is tubular structure, it is tunnel like structure, but at the end which is this gap or this crevice, or this hole, it is very narrow, but as we go inside it becomes more narrower and it reaches a point which is most important for the sense of hearing.

So, number 2; the second stage is understanding. So, basically the sound symbols are made meanings of and your brain processes the information to understand what you have heard. Number 3 is remembering because you have to remember because, you have to move further; why you have to remember? Because you have to listen to more information and then process or move further

Number 4 is interpreting. So, you have heard let us say half an hour let say you have heard for 10 minutes, 5 minutes somebody has said something a big dialogue you know and you have to make proper meaning of it as per your individual personality or your situation.

Number 5 is evaluating; evaluating means in the sense of bringing the value out of what is the sense, what did the other try to tell me, what meaning should I apply to the words which I have heard and how to move forward.

The way forward is number 6- responding. Then after these 5 stages you in fact respond or you speak. So, listening and the Hurier model that is the 6 stages of listening, hearing, understanding, remembering, interpreting, evaluating and responding.

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Listening and communication

Listening versus un-listening: Exploring the unethical behaviors of ineffective listeners

1. Fraudulent listeners
2. Monopolistic
3. Competers
4. Selective listeners
5. Avoiders
6. Defensive listeners
7. Attackers

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Now, what happens is, this lecture or this topic on listening skills is because, we have generally amongst us, we included, those who practice un-listening. So, let the ears be here, but we are not following the rest 5 processes of the Hurier model because, we are not committed to listening well. And this is unethical behavior of ineffective listeners that we try to be in these 7 ways, we try to in fact, fake listening we act as if we are listening but actually we are not listening.

The first example is that of fraudulent listeners, those who pretend to be listening. Number 2 is that of the monopolistic listener, those who monopolize the conversation, they do not listen to the other. Number 3 is competers those who are in, *the you know sometimes like* the situation you see in a court scene; there are two lawyers, for the two sides or the two parties and they are competing with each other because each of them is trying to save, or to protect or to *you know* save from punishment, his or her client. So, competers are those kind of listeners who has several competing information in their minds and therefore, they un-listen.

Number 4 is selective listeners; this is an instance of one of the lab activities which we have done or we will be doing that, on listening skills where suppose you imagine yourself at a railway station or at the airport and you are about to board a train or a flight. So, there will be so, many announcements, you know, let us forget the fact that nowadays some of the airports are soundless airports or they are called noiseproof airports and you

have big displays and all the incoming and the arrivals and the departures are just being listed on going up and down, again and again, at various places, in all the segments of the vast airport. The point is now at least in those airports and railway stations where still announcements continue to be made about arrivals and departures, you as a passenger will be in fact, listening only for your train number or your flight number you will not be listening to others.

As soon as you listen to the arrival departure time of your train number or your flight number you will then stop listening. So, you have been a selective listener in this instance. Then we have the fifth one which is the avoiders these are some people who we need counseling in fact, these are those who avoid listening. So, they are mentally withdrawn. So, psychologically also they have shut their doors their mental doors and they would not listen.

Number 6 is defensive listeners; defensive listeners are those who are making mental notes they may even be writing it down in a notepad or whatever. So, they are making notes because they have to use these points to defend themselves and the last is attackers this is the extreme and the worst kind of listeners. As the term is self explanatory I will not go further attackers are those un-listeners attackers are those negative listeners who are listening because their only purpose is to launch an attack on the one whom they have been listening to so far.

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Feedback: A prerequisite for effective listening

- What is feedback?

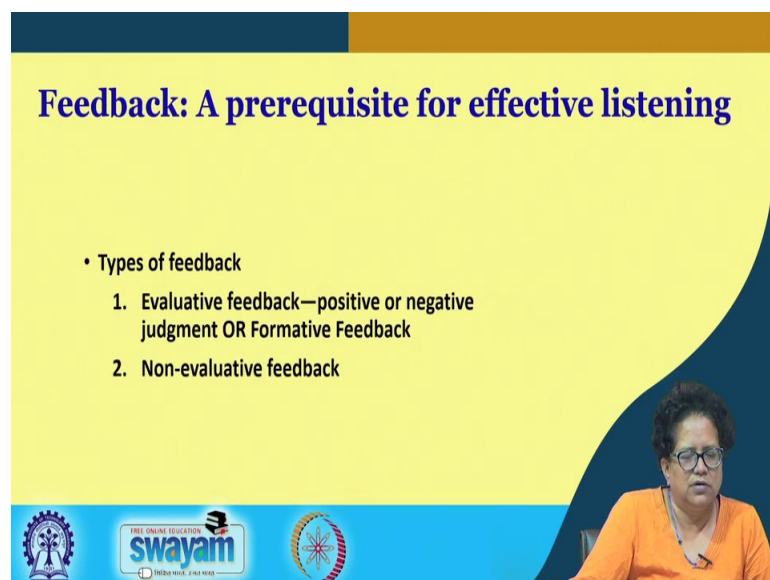
Feedback—information returned to a message source or a communicator

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So, to come back further to that important concept of feedback; feedback is a prerequisite for effective listening because, if you have effectively, ethically, properly, listened, you can give back proper response; the simple term for feedback to the speaker from whom you have heard something.

So, what is feedback? And feedback has been defined as information returned to the message source or the communicator. If you go back to the initial lecture on the introduction to communication, remember that you have the communicator and the communicate, the communicator says something and the communicator listens to that and then the listener have to send feedback or response.

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Feedback: A prerequisite for effective listening

- Types of feedback
 1. Evaluative feedback—positive or negative judgment OR Formative Feedback
 2. Non-evaluative feedback

So, this is what we are talking about. What are the kinds of feedback which we have in common day practice and in common day reality and in situations where we are in fact, indulging in listening and speaking. And I will just show you some of them. First of all we have a primarily speaking two types of feedback; one is evaluative and the second is non-evaluative. So, if we go to the first one evaluative feedback; we also divide it into two further types; positive feedback, negative feedback and the third one is a sub section, it lies between one and two it is the formative feedback.

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Feedback: A prerequisite for effective listening

- Evaluative feedback
 - Positive evaluative feedback—tends to keep communication and its resulting behaviors moving in the direction they are already heading
 - Negative evaluative feedback—serves a corrective function in that it helps extinguish undesirable communicative behaviors
 - Formative feedback—timed negative feedback

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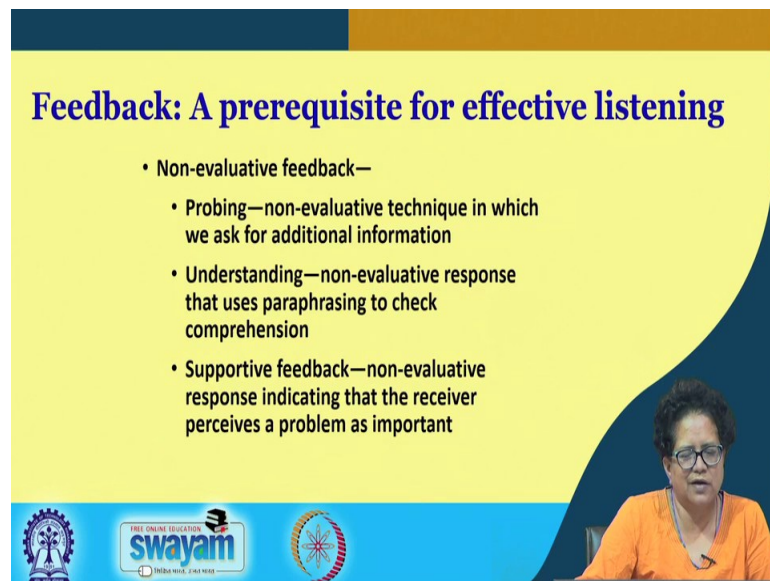
So, let us move further to evaluative feedback. So, let us come back to evaluative feedback. Now evaluative feedback as you understand the term, is feedback which gives you value which evaluates the content qualitatively and quantitatively; of what has been listened to. Evaluative feedback is of two types: positive and negative. So, let us define, first of all, positive evaluative feedback. It is that kind of responds which makes the communication and its resulting behavior moving in the direction they are already heading.

So, if two people are discussing and they seem to be coming to a conclusion or a common meeting point, positive evaluative feedback is in action, that is in place. Number 2 is negative evaluate feedback, it is the reverse of positive evaluate feedback as you very well understand this is that feedback defined as- it is the corrective function because it extinguishes undesirable communicative behavior.

So, in the previous case the people the conversants, the conversationist, the speaker and listener, they come to a common meeting point, in this one, there is none of this happening. And the third here on the slide we have is formative feedback; formative feedback. Let us say a class session is on and it is a tutorial class and tutorial class you have smaller number of students and so, in between the student and the teacher if there is a discussion going on from time to time the teacher can give feedback.

So, that the students opinions are formed and student is able to take back from this particular tutorial session, tutorial hour or you know class, here/she is able to get back much from this particular lecture. Because, the teacher has been working on formative feedback again we define it as timed negative feedback so, timed negative feedback I repeat, then let us come to non evaluative feedback.

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Feedback: A prerequisite for effective listening

- Non-evaluative feedback—
 - Probing—non-evaluative technique in which we ask for additional information
 - Understanding—non-evaluative response that uses paraphrasing to check comprehension
 - Supportive feedback—non-evaluative response indicating that the receiver perceives a problem as important

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Now, non evaluative feedback is not designed or it is not aimed or moving towards an idea of evaluation. The first of these is called probing and it is a technique which we employ to seek additional information. There is sometimes a situation where you may want for more examples, more data, more statistics and this is called probing. Number 2 is understanding; which you are not trying to make the other angry or you are not testing his or her intellect or knowledge.

But it is when you paraphrase the other, somebody describes or says something and you paraphrase the whole thing you repeat the entire information in your own words because, you would like to check whether you have actually understood, you would like to check your comprehension; comprehension means understanding. So, this is non-evaluative feedback- type number 2 and the 3rd is supportive feedback.

As in the previous case we had the idea of formative feedback, supportive feedback is non-evaluative response indicating that the receiver perceives a problem as important. So, when supportive feedback is given, then the conversation can move further and then

the speaker or the initial communicator can perceive, can understand that his or her conversation or the crux of the matter was important.

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Feedback: A prerequisite for effective listening

- Non-evaluative feedback—nondirective feedback
 1. “I” Messages—non-evaluative response that conveys our feelings about the nature of a situation
 2. “You” messages—response that places blame on another person
- Effects of feedback

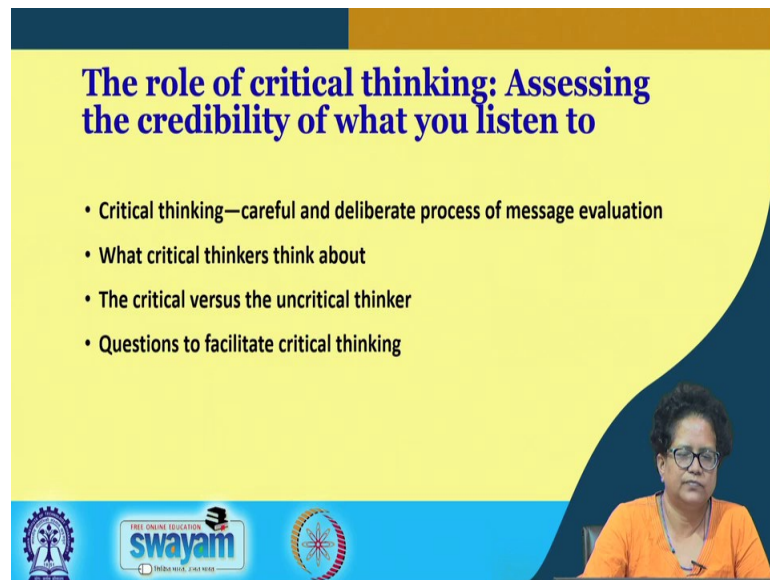
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We move further, now how do we give non-directive feedback? By non-directive feedback, I mean, that we are not trying to direct, or we are not trying to confront, or we are not trying to target the other in this kind of feedback, it is still non-evaluate feedback. For this we give two kinds of messages, message please remember and recall that in the initial class on communication introduction we had said that message is the content value of the communicative act between the communicative and communicative what has to become common is the message.

So, there are two types of messages when we talk about non directive feedback; the first is the I message as you understand it is about the feelings, about the nature of a situation non-evaluative response that conveys our feelings. So, it is in your words, it is your feelings about the nature or the dimensions or the matter of the situation. On the other hand we have number 2 here on the slide which is you message the response or the kind of feedback you give that places blame on the other person.

So, if it places blame or it insinuates or it like makes some kind of allegations, then it is like pointing the finger at you the other. So, there is a need finally, to consider the effects of feedback and when we are trying to develop our communication skills the idea is that we will think about this is at greater depth and length and breadth.

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The role of critical thinking: Assessing the credibility of what you listen to

- Critical thinking—careful and deliberate process of message evaluation
- What critical thinkers think about
- The critical versus the uncritical thinker
- Questions to facilitate critical thinking

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Now, what is your role as a critical thinker? Your role, your responsibility as a critical thinker is to assess, evaluate, judge, the truth of whatever you are listening to, the credibility, the purity, and the reliability of whatever you are listening to. If you could do that, you are in a sense performing the role of a critical thinker or a good listener. So, critical thinking we define it as careful and deliberate process of message evaluation careful.

So, you have to be careful of what meaning you are assigning to the words which you have got through the auditory symbols and slow and steady, deliberate you move stage wise and you think about the value of the message. So, there is a need now, to think about what critical thinkers actually think what do they do during the process of critical thinking?

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Technology's influence on listening and thinking

- Advances in technology continue to add wrinkles
- We can now be more selective about our willingness to listen

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So, if we have critical thinkers therefore, we have uncritical thinkers or what are called bad listeners and what questions should you consider to facilitate or to develop the art of critical thinking. Let us come to the way in which technology has influenced listening and thinking practices among us. Actually in fact, the amount of media and digital influx in our everyday communication scenarios is actually adding wrinkles to technology and also the way in which we are thinking and listening.

And therefore, you have you know, some of these students or some of these young people or some of these gay people or some of these people who do not care much about the others, they will just be putting a walkman or a speaker or a headphone and they will be going around the irrespective of whether they are in the midst of traffic or midst of people or midst of work or midst of something important going on.

So, they are simply lost in their own head space of listening to sounds and so and so forth. So, this idea of the headphone and the speakerphone and the idea of the speakers and the head devices is actually making us more selective and we are more willing to listen to and we are more unwilling to not listen to whatever we decide.

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Gender and listening

- Women (when listening) rely more on their feelings and intuition
- Men tend to listen more comprehensively than women

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So, what about gender and listening, how do the male and the female differ in their listening and critical thinking activities? Generally this is what research has proved that women when they listen, they rely more, they depend more on feelings and intuitions. On the other hand men are comprehensive listeners they look at the vastness and the maximum amount of information they would like to gather rather than women. Women would like to go deep and be sensitive and emotional while listening.

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Cultures influence on listening

- Western cultures are less open and tentative in their listening behavior
- Eastern cultures practice more speculative, metaphor thinking

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Then think about the; about the parameter of culture and across culture how do people behave when they are listening or critically thinking. If you think about the two main cultures; western culture are less open and they are tentative in their listening behavior. So, they would question, they would deliberate, they would be tentative, they would not be very confirmed and firm about what they have heard.

On the other hand we have the eastern cultures and eastern cultures like Indian people or our side of the world we would practice more speculative, we would be creative, you know we would start thinking this, that and the other we would start adding lot of information. And metaphoric thinking we would be very creative we would be thinking in terms of metaphors and symbols and similes you know you try to compare and contrast and we would therefore, be in the sense, maybe bad listeners.

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Media and technology's influence on listening and thinking

- Research suggests that children are at risk for developing attention deficit problems compared to children who watch less TV

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Now, let us look at what research has suggested regarding the influx of media and technology on listening and thinking. Research has suggested, this is quite a serious matter, research has suggested, recent research has suggested that children are at risk for developing ADD Attention Deficit Disorder problems, compared to children who watch less TV. So, this idea of watching TV as a pastime this has to be thought about, this has to be seriously considered now.

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Increasing your ear power: A program for effective listening

- Focusing your attention
 - Red-flag words—words which trigger an emotional reaction and drop listening efficiency to zero
 - Speech-thought differential—difference between thinking and speaking rate
- Setting appropriate goals
- Listening to understand ideas

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How do you have a program by which you can become an effective listener the first is to focus your attention. When you focus your attention you would look for two types of words and these kind of words are called red flag words. Why we call them red flag words are because they are defined as words which trigger an emotional reaction and drop listening efficiency to 0. Let us say you confront or you come face to face or you have been friends with, let us say of three differential scenarios to, African-American and you call him Nigger.

Now, this is constitutionally and by law banned, but this is a red flag word for the African-American who has been your friend and it will trigger an emotional reaction in him or her. So, that he or she will not listen to you anymore because he or she has been hurt to the core. On the other hand on this slide, we have also another definition and the important concept to be mentioned speech thought differential. This is the difference between the number of words you can speak and number 2, the number of words you can think critically about, in a minute. Let us say research says that a native speaker of English can speak 500 words per minute, let us say, it is an example.

And you can think or critically analyze these heard words at the rate of let us see 100 words per minute. So, this difference of 400 words is the difference between thinking and speaking rate. So, the thinking rate will always be higher and this different creates problem in communication. The second point after focusing attention on the speaker is to

set appropriate goals for yourself; in the sense that you decide how ethical and how good a listener will you be, act upon that. And the 3rd point on this slide is to understand the idea, do not go into the nitty-gritty and do not go along the margins, but think about the main idea what is being communicated to you.

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Increasing your ear power: A program for effective listening

- Listening to retain information
 - Repetition
 - Paraphrase—restate in your own words what another person has said
 - Visualization—the picturing of experience
- Listening to analyze and evaluate content
- Listening emphatically, listening actively

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Number 4 listen to retain information. So, increase your memory power increase your retention power by repeating what you have heard, by paraphrasing which is to restate in your own words what the other person has said. And, number 3 by visualization that is making a mental picture of the experience you have heard or undergone.

Number 5 is to listen to analyze and evaluate content very simple to understand good listeners, or those who aspire to be good listeners, think about the content and they analyze it. Because, they want quality out of that content; number last here is to be emphatic and to be an active listener.

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Increasing your ear power: A program for effective listening

- Listening to culture's influence
 - Dialogic listening—awareness of what happens between people as they respond to each other

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We move further to another concept which I would like to share with you which is called dialogic listening; dialogic listening. This has to be defined as an awareness of what happens between people as they respond to each other; respond meaning, dialogues are being shared as you have dialogue two people in logos or a discussion or conversation with each other.

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Summary

- Listening is a deliberate process through which we seek to understand and retain aural stimuli.
- The average person listens at only 45 percent efficiency.
- Understanding and using the listening level-energy involvement scale can help us develop more effective listening skills.
- A prerequisite of effective listening is effective feedback.


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So, what is actually happening between them is defined as the logical listening because both are in fact, in different points of time responding to each other. Let us summarize

what we have read; first of all we have learnt that listening is a deliberate process; it is not involuntary. It's deliberate process by which we seek to understand and retain keep with us the oral stimuli which has entered through the ears. Number 2 the average person, this is again research and its suggestions or propositions, the average person listens at only 45 percent efficiency, which means we still have long way to go and we can work on a program to increase our listening skills.

Number 3 understanding and using the listening level energy involvement scale can help us develop more effective listening skills. In other words, how much of your internal energy, how much are you actually involved in the listening process, can help you become a better listener. And the 4th one here, is that you must give proper feedback to prove that you have been an effective listener.

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Summary

- Feedback consist of all the verbal and nonverbal messages that a person consciously or unconsciously sends out in response to another person's communication.
- Improve your listening skills by learning to focus your attention while listening and by setting appropriate listening goals.
- Recognizing how culture, gender, and technology influence listening skills may further enhance our ability to develop more effective listening practices.

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Feedback what does it consists of? Feedback consists of all the verbal and nonverbal messages that a person consciously or unconsciously sends out in response to the communicator's communication.

We have also covered how to improve our listening skills by learning to focus attention and by setting appropriate goals for ourselves as we strive in our effort to become good listeners. The next point which we have covered today in this lecture is to understand the paradigms of culture, gender, technology and how these three concepts influence

listening skills. So, that understanding of these three will help us make better our ability to develop good listening practices.

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Selected References:

1. Understanding Human Communication – Adler & Rodman, OUP: 2003
2. Skills Development for Business & Management Students – Kevin Gallagher, 2001: OUP
3. Listening Skills – Ian Mackay, 2000
4. Communication Works – Gamble and Gamble, TMH: 2010
5. The Effective Communicator – John Adair, Jaico Pub. House: 2004
6. www.youtube.com

These are few of the references which I have used for the preparation of this lecture. And thank you so much for being with me, we shall meet soon.