

Unit 2: Listening

2.1 Listening to longer technical talks and completing exercises based on them.

INTRODUCTION

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.

“The most basic and powerful way to connect to another person is to listen. Just listen. Perhaps the most important thing we ever give each other is our attention.” _____ Dr. Rachel Naomi Remen

10 Tips to be a good listener:

1. Try to be still as you are listening.
2. Try to ignore distractions.
3. Make eye contact with the speaker.
4. Try to pinpoint the point of view of the speaker.
5. Try not to daydream. ... Refocus when you catch yourself thinking about something else.
6. Try not to think about what you are going to say next when another person is talking. Concentrate on the speaker.
7. Observe body language (including your own).
8. Learn how to paraphrase what you have heard.
9. Learn how to ask for clarification if you don't understand. Don't pretend to understand.
10. Avoid interrupting (unless you are practicing how to interrupt politely). Take notes if it is not distracting to the speaker.

Listening strategies:

Here are some strategies for improving your listening skills:

- Practice listening for the gist or main purpose.
- Reduce listening barriers.
- Listen for specific details such as problems.
- Listen for speaker bias.
- Make assumptions and predictions.
- Listen to many different accents.
- Listen with noise in the background. Learn to “tune out” other sounds.
- If you ask a question, listen for the answer.
- Practice summarizing and paraphrasing.
- Ask questions you think you know the answer to.
- Recognize pauses and false starts.
- Create your own questions.
- Find English music that you enjoy listening to.

Listening barriers

- ✓ The speaker spoke too quickly.
- ✓ The speaker used informal language and idioms.
- ✓ The vocabulary level is too high.
- ✓ You assumed incorrectly that you knew what they were going to say.
- ✓ The speaker has an unfamiliar accent.
- ✓ The recording is not clear.
- ✓ The recording is not loud enough.
- ✓ You are not interested in the topic.
- ✓ You don't have any background knowledge.
- ✓ You had a strong emotional reaction to a word or point that you heard.
- ✓ You did not give the speaker (or recording) your undivided attention.

- ✓ Something is distracting you.
- ✓ You are tired.
- ✓ You are hungry.
- ✓ You are nervous.

Activity

Plastic Panic

In the most places around the globe plastic bags are a big environmental worry. Many animals not just pets, but also small animals like squirrels, rats, birds, and stray animals foraging for food in our neighborhood end up eating lightweight _____. Apart from causing terrible pain due to internal blocks, plastic has compounds, which can damage the _____ organs and also retard their ability to resist disease. In the food chain, these compounds are also passed on the predators. Grazing cattle eat plastic wastes like lightweight plastic cups. Sometimes stray dogs put their heads into the small plastic bags with leftover food in the garbage and their heads get stuck in them, leading to _____. Plastic ropes and threads used for tying parcels are also extremely dangerous _ they can cause entanglement, especially among birds. When lightweight plastic ends up in our waterways, marine life, which includes fish, sea animals and water birds, feed in the rivers and seas and ends up as victims. A fine transparent plastic bags filled with water and debris looks a lot like a _____, the favourite food of sea turtles. The _____ association to save sea turtles (MEDASET) speaks of one sea turtle, which had ingested _____ such bags.

Having realized the seriousness of the issue, the Irish Government decided to do something about it. They imposed tax on using plastic bags. The practice has caught on in villages, towns and cities throughout Ireland. In just 17 months, there has been a stunning drop in the use of the _____ that choked the country's narrow lanes, quiet rivers and winding highways. The Irish Environment Department says that shoppers used around 1.2 billion plastic bags per year before the tax was imposed in _____. Since then, the use has dropped by around 95 percent. What the Government collects through the sale of bags goes for recycling programs. Plastic bags now form only 0.3 percent of

the total garbage collected. It was five percent before the tax. It took _____ years of campaigning to persuade the Irish Government to impose the levy.

In Australia, the government is looking into the Irish system to reduce plastic bag litter by 75 percent. _____ wants to ban plastic bags from the capital Dhaka. A year ago, South Africa made it illegal for shops to offer flimsy plastic shopping bags, sarcastically called the _____ because they are found all around the country. Shopkeepers in South African towns offer the more ecologically friendly polypropylene bags or thicker plastic bags that are economical to recycle.

In India, there is plastic garbage everywhere, even near temples and historic monuments. The reasons for this menace are the same, the world over. Explosive economic growth, followed by an increase in consumption, garbage and _____. But that still does not explain why people simply throw the plastic bags on the road knowing very well it will choke everything in sight.

