

B.Tech Semester 2
Professional Communication
Module:4

LISTENING AND
INTERVIEW SKILLS

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MEANING OF LISTENING

“God gives us two ears but only one mouth, because listening is twice as hard as talking.”

- 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.

- We probably spend more time using our Listening Skills than any other kind of skill
- Like other skills, Listening takes practice
- Real Listening is an active process
- Listening requires attention

Effective Listening

- **Effective Listening is the process of analyzing sounds, organizing them into recognizable patterns, interpreting the patterns and understanding the message by inferring the meaning**
- **Many of the problems we experience with people in our daily lives are primarily attributable to ineffective listening or lack of listening**

**The First and the foremost
communication skill that we learn in
our lives is nothing but “*LISTENING*”**

LISTENING



SPEAKING



WRITING



READING

Listening is not Hearing

- Listening and hearing are not the same. Hearing is the first stage of listening.
- Hearing occurs when our ears pick up sound waves which are then transported to our brain. This stage is our sense of hearing.
- Listening is a communication process and, to be successful, is an active process. In other words, we must be an active participant in this communication process. In active listening, meaning and evaluation of a message must take place before a listener can respond to a speaker.
- Therefore, the listener is actively working while the speaker is talking.
- Our thought speed is much faster than our speech speed.

Objectives of Listening

- **To learn**
- **To increase one's understanding**
- **To advise or counsel**
- **To relieve one's boredom (listening to music)**

Importance of Listening

- **Communication is not complete without effective Listening.**
- **An attentive listener stimulates better speaking by the speaker.**
- **A good listener learns more than an indifferent Listener.**
- **A good listener can restructure vague speaking in a way that produces clearer meaning.**
- **A good listener learns to detect prejudices, assumptions and attitudes.**

Active Listening

(i) It is the process of converting an idea or thought into message with complete involvement.

(ii) Listener encourages the speaker to express his ideas enthusiastically by showing interest in the speech.

(iii) It is a two way process where listener plays an active role.

(iv) Active listener never neglects the physical aspects of the speaker such as appearance, expressions, and bodily movements as they are very helpful to convey meaning to spoken words.

Passive Listening

(i) It is the process of just absorbing the message without any involvement.

(ii) The listener discourages the speaker by expressing boredom on his face.

(iii) It is a one way process where the listener plays no role.

(iv) Passive listener has nothing to do with these physical aspects as he wants to bring out no meaning from the spoken words.

Active Listening

(v) To encourage the speaker active listener responds non-verbally by rolling eyes, changing facial expressions, showing smile and in this way shows his keenness to listen.

(vi) Active listening leads to effective and sound listener-speaker relationship.

(vii) Active listener shows his thirst for knowledge and information by asking relevant questions frequently

Passive Listening

(v) Passive listener also responds non-verbally by showing boredom on face and discourages the speaker.

(vi) No scope for listener-speaker relationship and in fact the speaker wants to avoid such listeners.

(vii) Passive listener wants the speaker to conclude as early as possible and thus no chance of building up rapport between them.

CLASSIFICATION OF LISTENING

1. Discriminative listening

- This is the most basic type of listening.
- It involves identifying the difference between various sounds.
- It also enables one to differentiate between familiar and unfamiliar language.

2. Comprehension listening

- This type of listening involves something more than just differentiating between various sounds.
- It involves attaching meaning to what is being listened to, that is the message is comprehended.
- It may also include comprehending the non-verbal messages being conveyed intentionally or unintentionally by the speaker.

3.Evaluative listening

- This is also called as critical listening.
- This involves not only comprehending the message but also evaluating and analysing the message being received in light of one's own background. It involves judging the acceptability of what is said depending on how logical one finds it to be.

4. Attentive listening

- It involves paying attention to the words that are being spoken rather than understanding the head and heart of the person speaking. It involves making a conscious effort to listen attentively and decode the message. The concentration is on the verbal part of the message rather than the non-verbal aspect.

5.Pretence listening

- This involves more hearing than listening. It means pretending through facial expressions that one is listening to the communicated message when actually one is not.

6. Selective listening

- Listening is done only partly or selectively. It involves selecting the desired part of the message and ignoring the undesired part of the message. The attention of the listener is not focused and the listener keeps switching off and on.

7. Intuitive listening

- It is a higher form of listening. It means listening through the intuitive mind by silencing the other forms of internal dialogues going on simultaneously.

8. Intensive Listening and Extensive Listening

	Intensive Listening	Extensive Listening
Class goal	listen for accuracy	listen fluently
Listening purpose	answer questions/study words/pronunciation	get information/enjoy meaning
Focus	teacher chooses/often	you choose/easy
Material	difficult	a lot
Amount	not much	comfortable
Speed	uncomfortable	stop if you don't like it
Method	must finish use dictionary	no dictionary

Important Elements/ Guidelines of Empathetic Listening

- Build the trust
- Be attentive while listening
- Do not hurt the speaker's feeling.
- Allow disputants to express their emotions
- Reduce tension
- Provide problem solving environment
- Understand emotion and feeling of speaker
- Show interest in listening
- Use body language while listening
- Use words like "I understand you" or "I see"
- Do not interrupt/interrogate/teach/give advice/rehearse in your own head.
- Use open ended question
- Be sensitive to emotions

BARRIERS TO EFFECTIVE LISTENING

- A *barrier to listening* is anything that is physically or philologically hindering you from recognizing, understanding, and accurately interpreting the message that you are receiving. Following are some of the barriers to effective listening-

1. Physical Barriers

2. People – Related Barriers

i. Physiological Barriers

ii. Psychological Barriers

1. PHYSICAL BARRIERS

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

2. PEOPLE RELATED BARRIERS

i. PHYSIOLOGICAL BARRIERS

- **STATE OF HEALTH** – State of health of the listener and the speaker affects the listening ability. Fever, pain or any other form of bodily discomfort makes it difficult for a person to listen or speak comfortably.
- **DISABILITY** – Hearing deficiencies may lead to poor listening. Similarly, speech disorders of the speaker may make a speech incoherent to the listener. Speaker's accent may also make it difficult for the listener to comprehend.
- **WANDERING ATTENTION** – Human mind can process words at the rate of about 500 per minute, whereas a speaker speaks at the rate of about 150 per minute. The difference between the two leaves the listener with sufficient time to let his mind wander.

II.PSYCHOLOGICAL BARRIERS

- **BEING UNSURE OF THE SPEAKER’S ABILITY** – Based on past experience or inputs from sources, the listener may have a preconceived notion of the speaker’s ability. He may perceive the speaker to not be well informed, or to be lacking in depth and ability. Hence the listener will not listen to what the speaker has to say.
- **PERSONAL ANXIETY** – Sometimes the listener is preoccupied with personal concerns and anxieties. This makes it difficult to perceive what is being said by the speaker.
- **ATTITUDE** – The listener may be highly egocentric with a “know it all attitude” and may not listen as he feels that he already knows what the listener has to say.

- **IMPATIENCE** – The listener may not have patience to wait for the other person to finish what he has to say. He may be intolerant or may be eager to add his own points to the discussion. As a result, his desire to speak overcomes his desire to listen, thus acting as a barrier.
- **EMOTIONAL BLOCKS** – Our deep seated beliefs in certain ideas may make it difficult for us to listen to ideas which go against our belief. We may hear such an idea wrongly or it may get distorted in our mind to match our perception or we may completely block it off by not listening to it. Many a time, we block something off completely because of painful memories associated with it.

TIPS FOR BEING A GOOD LISTENER

- 1.GIVE YOUR FULL ATTENTION ON THE PERSON WHO IS SPEAKING-**Don't look out the window or at what else is going on in the room.
- 2.MAKE SURE YOUR MIND IS FOCUSED-** It can be easy to let your mind wander if you think you know what the person is going to say next, but you might be wrong! If you feel your mind wandering, change the position of your body and try to concentrate on the speaker's words.
- 3.LET THE SPEAKER FINISH BEFORE YOU BEGIN TO TALK-** Speakers appreciate having the chance to say everything they would like to say without being interrupted. When you interrupt, it looks like you aren't listening, even if you really are.

4.LET YOURSELF FINISH LISTENING BEFORE YOU BEGIN TO SPEAK- You can't really listen if you are busy thinking about what you want to say next.

5.LISTEN FOR MAIN IDEAS-The main ideas are the most important points the speaker wants to get across. They may be mentioned at the start or end of a talk, and repeated a number of times. Pay special attention to statements that begin with phrases such as "My point is..." or "The thing to remember is..."

6.ASK QUESTIONS-If you are not sure you understood what the speaker has said, just ask. For example, you might say, "When you said that no two zebras are alike, did you mean that the stripes are different on each one?"

7.GIVE FEEDBACK-Sit up straight and look directly at the speaker. Now and then, nod to show that you understand. At appropriate points you may also smile, frown, laugh, or be silent. These are all ways to let the speaker know that you are really listening. Remember, you listen with your face as well as your ears!

HOW TO DEVELOP EFFECTIVE LISTENING SKILL?

- 1. Make consistent eye-contact while talking**– Body language has a significant role in communication. Maintaining eye contact communicates interest, focus, and understanding with the other person. Make sure to tailor your eye contact as per the need of others.
- 2. Avoid distractions** – Always focus on the conversation and do not let your mind wander. Do not let random thoughts disturb your flow and break your concentration.
- 3. Understand the context of the speech** – While communicating, focus on the specific words and phrases and try to understand the content and context of the conversation before replying.

- 4. Show you are an effective listener by nodding** – Other than eye contact, you should nod and smile while talking as it is the best way to show your agreement and interest in what the speaker is saying. Do not interrupt while someone is talking. Wait for them to finish and then raise open-ended questions in a polite manner.
- 5. Avoid conversation when stressed or overworked**–Try to avoid or postpone important meetings or discussions if you are overstressed. It gets difficult to concentrate when you are exhausted, and you end up wasting time. A bit of Yoga or meditation helps you distress in such situations.
- 6. Pick up important points and let the speaker know** – Sometimes, our attention gets drifted and we face trouble focusing on the conversation. For such instances, try to pick up a few significant points and discuss them when the speaker finishes talking. Make an honest effort and clarify your doubts.
- 7. Ask open-ended questions** – If you did not understand some parts of the conversation, encourage them to elaborate and ask open-ended questions to get lengthy responses from the speaker. This helps in understanding the big picture.

8. Stay equipped with knowledge—Gather relevant information on the topic so that you can not only contribute effectively to the conversation but also listen patiently when the speaker discusses the same or related topics.

9. Provide small encouragements – You can fight silence and build rapport with the speaker by using small verbal encouraging words such as “right”, “sure”, “yes”, “that makes sense”, “I understand”, and others.

10. Practice listening at home – Listen to podcasts on developing listening skills and learn from them. You can also play an audio and try to gauge your listening ability. Recollect from what was played and make pointers. Seek assistance from a friend to help you evaluate your listening skills.

INTERVIEW SKILLS

Definition

- The term interview has been derived from the French word *entre voir* that means to glimpse or to see each other.
- By definition it means a meeting for obtaining information by questioning a person or persons.

- Basically ,an **interview** is a **conversation between two** people (the interviewer and the interviewee) where questions are asked by the interviewer to obtain information from the interviewee.
- The word **interview** can have different meanings. For example a reporter interviews a celebrity for television.

The Purpose of an Interview

- An interview has two purposes :-
- To find if the candidate has the right attitude and fits the requirement and company culture
- To find the best candidate to fill a vacancy

Advantages of Interview

- Deep and free response
- Flexible, adaptable
- Glimpse into respondent's tone, gestures
- Ability to probe, follow-up,
- Clarify misunderstandings about questions

Disadvantages of Interview

- Costly in time and personnel
- Impractical with large numbers of respondents
- Requires skill
- May be difficult to summarize responses
- Possible biases: interviewer, respondent, situation

What does an interviewer look for ?

- Who you are as a person
- Your knowledge
- Your skills
- Your attitude
- Your ability to interact with people
- Your capacity to take work pressure

Types of Interviews

BASIS

- CLASSIFICATION ACCORDING TO STRUCTURE
- CLASSIFICATION ACCORDING TO THE PURPOSE
- CLASSIFICATION ACCORDING TO INTERVIEW'S CONTENT
- CLASSIFICATION ACCORDING TO ADMINISTERING THE INTERVIEW

I. CLASSIFICATION ACCORDING TO STRUCTURE

1. STRUCTURED OR DIRECT INTERVIEW

- The questions and acceptable responses are specified in advance
- Responses are rated for appropriateness of content
- Also called standardized interviews as they are pre planned to a high degree of accuracy and precision

2. UNSTRUCTURED OR INDIRECT INTERVIEW OR OPEN-ENDED INTERVIEW

- Not directed by questions or comments as to what the candidate should be asked
- No set format is followed
- Candidate is encouraged to express himself on any topic of his interest, his expectations, background etc.
- Interviewers look for traits of character and nature of his aspirations, strengths, weaknesses, potential etc.

3. SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW

- Specific topic areas
- A general set of questions
- The interview flows like a conversation and topics are covered as they come up.

Pros and Cons of Structured & Unstructured Interview

STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS

- More reliable and valid as all candidates are asked the same set of questions
- Enhance consistency across candidates

UNSTRUCTURED INTERVIEWS

- Flexibility to pursue points of interest as they develop
- Help in assessing the clarity of thoughts of the candidate

II. CLASSIFICATION ACCORDING TO PURPOSE

1. STRESS INTERVIEW

- This type of interview is rare in the present job scenario.
- It was a very common interview method when selecting for sales position.

Stress interview means-

- Being asked more than one question at a time;
- Being asked further questions without being allowed adequate time to respond;
- The interviewer adopts a hostile behavior and deliberately puts the candidate on defensive by trying to annoy, embarrass or frustrate him;
- He asks questions rapidly, criticizes his/her answers, interrupts him/her frequently, makes derogatory remarks etc.
- Having his/her feelings provoked.

Why stress interviews?

- This interview is an attempt to see how the candidates handle themselves under stress.
- So, the interviewer deliberately assumes a sarcastic or argumentative position.
- The trick for the interviewee is to remain calm under such a situation.

2. APPRAISAL/ ASSESSMENT INTERVIEW

- A discussion following a performance appraisal
- In which the supervisor and employee discuss the employee's rating and
- Possible remedial actions to be taken.

3. EXIT INTERVIEW

- When an employee leaves the company for any reason, an exit interview is conducted
- Aims at eliciting information about the job or related matters
- Help the employer in having a better insight into what is right or wrong about the company
- Highlights the work of an HR Manager

III. CLASSIFICATION ACCORDING TO ADMINISTERING INTERVIEW

1. ONE TO ONE INTERVIEW

- Single interviewer
- Who takes interview one by one
- May be structured, unstructured or sequential
- Easier to handle, generally more informal
- Best way to handle such interviews is to relate them as a form of a conversation

2. SEQUENTIAL/SERIAL INTERVIEW

- These interviews are those in which the applicant is interviewed sequentially by several persons (interviewers)
- Each one rates the applicant on a standard evaluation form and these ratings are then compared before the hiring decision is taken
- Each interviewer rates from his/her own point of view, asks different questions and forms an independent opinion of the candidate

3. GROUP INTERVIEW/ GROUP DISCUSSION

- The main purpose of this interview is to see how the interviewee interacts with others and how he/ she influences others with his/her knowledge and reason.
- Also known as GD's, a topic for discussion is given to a group.

Why group interviews?

- Group interview is also the best way to discover any leadership potential, group participation, team playing skills and communication skills among the candidates.
- The selected candidates from the group interview are then taken for an informal one to one interview.

4. PANEL INTERVIEW/ COMMITTEE INTERVIEW

- A panel interview comprises more than two members interviewing a person for the hiring.
- It is most common mode of interview when hiring at the senior level.
- The interviewee should try to connect with each interviewer and the best way to do this is to read the personality of each interviewer.

- In a panel interview, the interviewer tries to gauge the group management and group presentation skills of the interviewee.
- The interviewee should maintain eye contact with the person asking the questions but also seek eye contact with the other members of the panel.

IV. CLASSIFICATION ACCORDING TO INTERVIEW'S CONTENT

1. SITUATIONAL INTERVIEW

- Here the interview will focus on the individual's ability to project what his behavior will be in a given situation.
- The interview can be both structured and situational with predetermined questions requiring the candidate to project what his behavior will be.

2. JOB RELATED INTERVIEW

- Here the interviewer tries to deduce what the applicant's on-the-job performance would be, based on his answers about his past behaviors.
- Job related questions are asked to draw conclusions about the candidate's ability to handle the job to be filled.

3. BEHAVIOURAL INTERVIEW

- Here a situation is described and candidates are asked how they have behaved in the past in such a situation.
- While situational interviews ask candidates to describe how they would react to a situation in future, the behavioral interviews seek candidates to describe how did they react to situations in the past.

4. PSYCHOLOGICAL INTERVIEWS

Psychological interviews are interviews conducted by a psychologist, in which questions are intended to assess personal traits such as reliability or dependability etc.

SOME OTHER TYPES OF INTERVIEW

TELEPHONE INTERVIEW/ONLINE(SKYPE)

- Phone interviews are increasingly used in mass hiring.
- The interview is conducted entirely over the phone and this is very effective in eliminating any bias that may arise from the appearance and manner of the candidate.

PROMOTION INTERVIEW (of the employees who are due for promotion)

ANNUAL INTERVIEW (before writing annual reports, reporting officer interacts with employees subordination)

PERIODICAL INTERVIEW (with the existing employees)

PROBLEM INTERVIEW (of an employee whose performance is unsatisfactory-to find out reasons and find solutions)

WALK-IN INTERVIEW (no specific candidates are called, but those who are eligible can come with their valid documents)

VIDEO CONFERENCING (using video technology; clothing, body language and dialogue are important here as well)

CASE INTERVIEW (to solve problems ‘on the spot’)

Interview Etiquette

(DOs and DON'Ts for an interview)

Interview etiquette refers to codes of conduct an individual must follow while appearing for interviews.

Let us go through some interview etiquette:

Do

- Groom yourself well
- Show enthusiasm
- Carry extra copies of your resume
- Wear a cheerful smile
- Be polite, assertive and firm
- Be genuine and truthful when you Reply
- Look into the eyes of the interviewer while talking to him/her

DON'Ts

- Do not demonstrate overconfidence
- Do not answer before the question has been completed
- Do not talk continuously
- Do not be rude or get into an argument with the interviewers
- Do not fiddle with your tie or pen
- Do not extend your hand first for a handshake
- Do not be unclear about your expectations from the job

QUESTIONS YOU MUST PREPARE FOR..

- Tell me something about yourself.
- What are your hobbies ?
- Why did you do your MBA after graduation ?
- Which is the most recent book that you have read ?
- Have you heard about (a current topic) ?
- What will you do if you reach office one morning and find out that you have lost your job ?
- What was your role in your previous company ?
- What are your expectations from the job ?
- What are your strengths and weaknesses ?
- Give us an example of an adverse situation at work and how you tackled it ?

LIMITATIONS OF INTERVIEWS

- Personal Bias
- The Halo Effect
- Constant error
- Leniency
- Projection
- Stereotyping
- Snap judgement
- Lack of Integration
- Pressure to Hire
- Too much/ Too Little Talking

After Interview

- Thank them for calling you for the interview.
- Indicate that you look forward to hear from them.