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ACTIVE LISTENING SKILLS AS AN ELEMENT OF INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION

Abstract. Active listening is an important element of the communication process and key to success. Listening is an integrative action physical, psychological, emotional, social, intellectual and environmental inputs. It ensures effective and healthy communication between individuals and institutions. On the other hand, it has an important effect on the prevention of communication conflicts. It is know importance by everyone but being ignored effective listening skills is communication process. So in this studying will be refer active listening skills and importance.

Key words: Active listening, interpersonal communication, listening.

Research type: Review.

1. INTRODUCTION

Active listening is having good listening skills. An active listener analyzes what the speaker is saying for hidden messages, and meanings contained in the verbal communication. An active listener looks for non-verbal messages from the speaker in order to indicate the full meaning of what is being said. With active listening a person must be willing to hear what someone is saying and the intent to try to understand what the meaning of what the other person said. When active listening is

used, there can be multiple benefits. Being an active listener means that you have the possibility to become a more effective listener over time and your leadership skills will strengthen. Listening comprehension, which is the key to the communication process involving receiving, processing and interpreting the messages, it is so importance all people (Aytar, 2019: 1).

Communication is simply the act of transferring information from one place, person or group to another. Every communication involves (at least) one sender, a message and a recipient. Listening is the most ignored skill among language skills but also this skill is the one which has to be taken into consideration at first. With the lack of development of listening skill, other language skills are difficult to develop because contrary to the common sense, listening skill is one of the most important of language skills (Akdemir, 2010). Interpersonal communication is the process by which people exchange information, feelings, and meaning through verbal and non-verbal messages: It is face-to-face communication (www.skillsyouneed.com).

2. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK OF THE STUDY

2.1. What is Listening?

Listening is a vital value for human beings. Recently, listening skills has gained importance both in researches and pedagogy. Listening is the most fundamental component of interpersonal communication skills. Listening is an important factor for communication to achieve purpose. Educators' views on listening have undergone a lot of changes so far (Aytar, 2019: 7). Listening has been defined in various ways; one of the early definitions by Allen and Corder (1974) states that listening is being able to comprehend the accent or pronunciation of a speaker, grammar and to recognize the words and understand what he means. Nichols (1974) defines it as "the attachment of meaning to aural symbols" in a short way. Brown and Yule

(1983) regard listening as the ability to comprehend the spoken forms of a language (cited in Bal, 2019: 19). According to Vandergrift (1999), listening is a long definition by stating that listening is a complex and active process.

2.1.1. The act of listening is a three-step process:

➤ **Attention:** Notice taken of someone or something; the regarding of someone or something as interesting or important.

➤ **Understanding:** It is a psychological process related to an abstract or physical object, such as a person, situation, or message whereby one is able to think about it and use concepts to deal adequately with that object.

➤ **Evaluation:** Evaluation is a systematic determination of a subject's merit, worth and significance, using criteria governed by a set of standards.

2.2. Types of Listening

➤ **Interactive Listening:** Interactive listening means attentive listening, where you listen well and concentrate on what is being said without falling out of touch with the speaker and being therefore able to respond efficiently.

➤ **Non-Interactive Listening:** Non-interactive listening situations are listening to the radio, TV, films, lectures, or sermons. In such situations, we usually don't have the opportunity to ask for clarification, slower speech or repetition (<http://softskills4us.blogspot.com>).

3. ACTIVE LISTENING

Active listening is a skill that can be acquired and developed with practice. However, active listening can be difficult to master and will, therefore, take time and patience to develop. "Active listening" means, as its name suggests, actively listening. That is fully concentrating on what is being said rather than just passively "hearing" the message of the speaker. Active listening involves listening with all senses. As well as giving full attention to the speaker, it is important that the "active

listener” is also “seen” to be listening - otherwise the speaker may conclude that what they are talking about is uninteresting to the listener. Interest can be conveyed to the speaker by using both verbal and non-verbal messages such as maintaining eye contact, nodding your head and smiling, agreeing by saying “yes” or simply “mmm, hmm” to encourage them to continue. By providing this “feedback” the person speaking will usually feel more at ease and therefore communicate more easily, openly and honestly. Listening is not something that just happens (that is hearing), listening is an active process in which a conscious decision is made to listen to and understand the messages of the speaker. Listeners should remain neutral and non-judgmental, this means trying not to take sides or form opinions, especially early in the conversation. Active listening is also about patience - pauses and short periods of silence should be accepted. Listeners should not be tempted to jump in with questions or comments every time there are a few seconds of silence. Active listening involves giving the other person time to explore their thoughts and feelings, they should, therefore, be given adequate time for that. Active listening not only means focusing fully on the speaker but also actively showing verbal and non-verbal signs of listening (www.skillsyouneed.com).

3.1. Signs of Active Listening

Non-verbal signs of attentive or active listening: This is a generic list of non-verbal signs of listening, in other words people who are listening are more likely to display at least some of these signs.

- Smile
- Eye contact
- Posture
- Mirroring
- Distraction

3.2. Verbal Signs of Attentive or Active Listening

- Positive reinforcement

- Casual and frequent use of words and phrases. (such as, “very good”, “yes” or “indeed”, “interesting”, “really”, etc...)
- Remembering
- Questioning
- Reflection
- Clarification
- Summarisation

3.3. Barriers to Effective Listening

It is common, when listening to someone else speak, to be formulating a reply whilst the other person is still talking. However, this means that we are not really listening to all that is being said. Even good listeners are often guilty of critically evaluating what is being said before fully understanding the message that the speaker is trying to communicate. The result is that assumptions are made and conclusions reached about the speaker's meaning, that might be inaccurate. Barriers to effective listening are present at every stage of the listening process. At the receiving stage, noise can block or distort incoming stimuli. At the interpreting stage, complex or abstract information may be difficult to relate to previous experiences, making it difficult to reach understanding. At the recalling stage, natural limits to our memory and challenges to concentration can interfere with remembering. At the evaluating stage, personal biases and prejudices can lead us to block people out or assume we know what they are going to say. At the responding stage, a lack of paraphrasing and questioning skills can lead to misunderstanding (<https://2012books.lardbucket.org>).

4. CONCLUSION

Listening and understanding listening is a prerequisite for interpersonal communication. Listening is a skill that human beings first acquired and have been developing continuously from the very first moments of their life. As Vandergrift (1999) states, listening is a complex process and people should not get

confused with listening and hearing because they are basically different. Kline (1996) states that “hearing is the reception of sound, listening is the attachment of meaning to the sound. Hearing is passive, listening is active”. So, it can be said that listening is an active process in which people aim to perceive the message and the meaning underlying the message intended by the speaker in contrast to the hearing process (cited in Bal, 2019: 19). Listening is occasionally accepted as a passive skill. Despite being traditionally accepted as a passive skill, listening is defined as an active and a purposeful process of interpreting what we hear (Helgesen, 2003). O’Malley, Chamot and Kupper (2003) argue that listening, rather than being passive and unconscious, is a conscious and active process that the listener’s existing knowledge and contextual information are both involved, so it is undeniably obvious that the cognitive process.

Active listening is a technique that is used in counseling, training, and solving disputes or conflicts. It requires that the listener fully concentrate, understand, respond and then remember what is being said (www.slideshare.net). This is opposed to other listening techniques like reflective listening and empathic listening. Reflective listening is where the listener repeats back to the speaker what they have just heard to confirm understanding of both parties (www.nature.berkeley.edu).

According to findings obtained from the study by Bulut (2013), it was seen that active listening education positively contributed to the development of students' levels of listening comprehension, reading comprehension and vocabulary. According findings obtained from the study by Güven (2007) , it was concluded that the learning styles of the students did not improve efficiently in the teacher-centered, course book based and monotonous classroom environments. On the other hand, the learning environments in which the learning style-based activities were held were found to affect the achievements, the

attitudes and the retention capacity of the learners positively. According to findings obtained from the study by Öztürk (2017), the following findings are present: Teachers' opinions on effective listening skills of school principals in general are "generally" level. According to the gender variable of the teachers, there was no significant difference in the opinions of school principals regarding effective listening skills. As a result of the findings research were carry out by Şiringür (2010), it was found that strategy training had a significant effect on students' listening skills and metacognitive awareness development. The study showed that metacognitive strategy training can contribute to students' listening skills and increase their metacognitive awareness. According to the findings obtained from the measurement studies and the interviews with the students by Mattussi-Gümüş (2019), it is concluded that the groups of students with voice and visual stimulus listening texts are more successful than the students who are faced with subtitles.

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