

# Enhancing the Listening Skills of the First-year Engineering Students: An Activity Based Approach

K. Jhansi Rani, Assistant Professor (Sr. Scale), Vasavi College of Engineering, Hyderabad-INDIA  
jhansiranik2013@gmail.com

**ABSTRACT** - The term 'communication strategies (CSs)' has been portrayed diversely by numerous researchers over the previous years. For example, as proposed by Faerch and Kasper, it is perceived as the manners in which students used to stay away from correspondence boundaries. Listening is one of the unavoidable parts of communication strategies and language learning. Being actually present and intellectually missing is the conduct that goes with the classroom decorum propriety of many Engineering students. To trigger enthusiasm in the student for listening is the need of great importance. A mix of customary and current strategies in enhancing the listening abilities is the key. The teachers of English need to adopt various strategies and techniques as per the level of the learners. Innovation is utilitarian whenever used capably. The current paper centers around different exercises the researcher practices in class room with the first-year engineering students that has brought best outcomes.

**Keywords:** *Communication strategies, Language learning, Listening abilities, Classroom Practices etc.*

## I. INTRODUCTION

"Most of the times we assume that we are listening well. But we may not. Mind wanders away, difficulties in understanding the messages occur and misunderstandings arise as a result" (K. R. Lakshmi Narayanan, 2009).

Engineering experts are anticipated to keep rapport and connect with their clients. Good listeners are proved to be the satisfactory marketers and specialists. They can persuade and convince their customers, turn in extra output and establish them as the asset to their enterprise. In order to take instructions or to research a concept, listening skill is inevitable. It facilitates to rectify one's drawbacks, provides worldly information, analytical and crucial wondering and enables remedy conflicts. "If speaking is silver, then listening is gold" adjudicates a Turkish Proverb. "To concentrate nicely, is as effective a means of communication and impact as to speak properly" articulates Marshall. "Listening talent helps powerful relationship within and out of doors the agency, an character with good listening capability can growth knowledge, develop revel in, develop employer. It is one of the first-rate talents required for personnel." (Aruna, 2008).

Hence, listening is a complicated manner, which includes perceiving the sounds correctly in addition to knowledge the explicit and implied which means of the oral message. Listening comprehension includes numerous capabilities and sub abilities. These skills encompass scanning

prediction speech decoding comprehending and oral discourse analysis.

This paper highlights various activities that may be executed efficaciously to promote student's listening skills.

### Active Listening

At first, the students are explained the difference between hearing and listening through a simple activity. They are asked to make a list of sounds they can hear: the fan, AC, ring tone, etc.

They are then asked to close their eyes and listen attentively this time. It has been observed that this time the list of sounds are more when compared to the previous list.

The students are also explained the importance of non-verbal communication:

- Concentration
- Eye contact with the listener.
- Facial expressions
- Sitting posture which denotes active listening
- Head movements

Initiating a Conversation (Breaking the Ice) This activity is used to check how good the freshers are at listening. The students are enthusiastic to develop a rapport with their classmates. The students are asked to interact with each other and collect information about their pair mates about likes and dislikes, favourite food, favourite one liners, favourite holiday spot, role model, short term goals and

long terms etc. The students have to introduce their pair mates to the class and the students have to later answer questions asked by the teacher about the introductions done by the students on the stage. This activity goes very well as they are interested and curious to know about their friends.

## II. METHODOLOGY

**Listening to a Speech:** One speech of a celebrity is played and the students have to fill up a worksheet after listening to the speech.

*Ex: The speech of Susmita Sen on Gender Equality.*

The students pay attention to the speech again if required. They ask one or two questions related to the speech. Later the teacher divides the students into groups and they are able to alternate questions based at the speech. The questions may be inferential, factual and guessing. The group that answers greater range of questions is the winner.

### Data collection and Analysis

This activity, performed via the researcher, proved to be thrilling. Also, the gaining knowledge could be traced whilst the students have been offered marks primarily based on their capacity of their memory, language, and content.

**Cuisine Story:** During this activity, students are divided into groups of six each. They are then asked to describe the recipe of any dish and the other students of the other group have to remember and answer the questions based on the recipe described. The recipe should contain the measurements, instructions, procedure of the different recipe and its preparation. A group of students jot down questions from the description. The class is divided into two teams. Questions are posed, answers are elicited and the winners are announced. This is a very interesting activity and proves that learning can be a great fun. It has been observed that even a vernacular medium students become active, attentive, listen and contribute to make his/her team win.

**Intonation and its importance:** Intonation and stress in English language is like an icing on the cake to make communication in the English language effective. The engineering students are expected to have optimum hold on effective pronunciation skills and appropriate intonation in English Language. Based on the knowledge and usage of the language in terms of pronunciation, the professional is identified as an effective communicator. Stress and intonation play an important role in understanding an utterance. As Krishna Mohan opines, "When a listener encounters different tone he can easily guess the unsaid part of the sentence" (Krishna Mohan, 2008).

## III. RESULTS AND FINDINGS BY THE ACTIVITIES

As a part of teaching intonation, the following activities can be found and organized the below.

1. Identifying the intonation and stress used in the classic songs of different movies in English. Example: My Fair Lady. The students have to jot down the different words that can be categorized into nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs (content words.) as they listen to the song. The songs can be played twice based on the necessity. The teacher will check with the list of words the students have jotted down and the student who can write the maximum number of words is the winner.

2. Listening can be practiced by making the students work into different groups. They can be given different types of sentences like declarative, question, question tag, exclamatory, choice questions, questions that give 'yes' 'no' answers etc. The students of the first group read out their list of sentences to the students of group 2 and then to the III group and so on. They should identify the sentence and recognize the tone of the speaker, falling, rising, rising - falling and falling-rising. The group which gets the highest score are declared the winners. The teacher moderates this activity and sees to it that the students pronounce the words correctly. This activity aids in pronunciation and trains to frame different sentences properly. It is a very productive activity for active listening.

At this stage, the students are explained about the possible barriers during the listening process. Some of these include the external noise, misinterpretation of information because of the use of homonyms and heteronyms, concentrating on the dress code of the speaker etc.

## IV. CONCLUSION

"Listening requires voluntary attention and making sense of what is heard. It requires a conscious effort to interpret the sounds, grasp the meanings of the words and react to the message". (Raman, 2008). This is a very important statement that holds a lot of weightage. At the same time there is a need to understand that, as teachers we should be able to show the mirror to the students and help them identify what are the barriers that they face and how to overcome them. As the statement says that to listen actively the learners need to make a conscious effort to interpret the sounds, the learner has to have patience, learning attitude rather than 'I know everything' kind of an attitude. There has to be attentiveness towards what is being heard: only then the listening happens otherwise it is put under hearing. To grasp the meaning of the words the learner has to ask open ended-questions, summarise what is heard, and ask for clarification. "The goal of listening is to absorb the message and analyse the ideas to make critical judgement. To absorb the message and analyse it the learner has to train and tune

the mind to slow down, look for nonverbal cues and withhold hasty judgement which could lead to missing out on critical judgement. This listening evaluates message at several levels; the logic of the argument; strength of the evidence and validity of the conclusions” (Aruna, 2009). If the various content words in this statement are looked at from the point of understanding and bringing out the way out to learn to listen actively, the learners have to be able to identify the barriers to listening so that they can go for reverse engineering and tackle the barriers effectively.

Finally, the students are asked to role-play some formal and informal situations to foster their listening abilities.

Hence, following an appropriate methodology, the listening skills of the learners can be enhanced.

### REFERENCES

- [1]. Argentine Proverb. <https://thefahrenheitgroup.com/finance-news/who-speaks-sows-who-listens-reaps-argentine-proverb/>
- [2]. Covey, Stephen. Stephen Covey Quotes. <https://www.goodreads.com/quotes/92125-seek-first-to-understand-then-to-be-understood>
- [3]. Dhanavel SP. “Thinking as a Communication Skill”. English Language Teaching in India: The Shifting Paradigms. New Delhi: MC Graw Hill, 2012, 98.
- [4]. Kaufman. D. J. D. J. Kaufman Quotes. [www.worldofquotes.com/quote/51515/index.html](http://www.worldofquotes.com/quote/51515/index.html)
- [5]. Koneru Aruna. “Listening Skill.” Professional Communication. New Delhi: Tata Mc Graw- Hill, 2008, 315.
- [6]. Koneru Aruna. “Listening Skills.” Professional Communication. New Delhi: Tata Mc Graw- Hill, 2009, 317.
- [7]. Lakshminarayanan KR.” Listening”. Effective Technical English. Scitech. Chennai, 2009, 225.
- [8]. Lakshminarayanan KR. “Listening Skills.” A Course book on English. Chennai: Scitech, 2009, 3.
- [9]. “Listening.” Handbook of Practical Communication Skills. Ed- Chrissie Wright. Mumbai: Jaico, 2006, 48.
- [10]. Mackay, Harvey. Harvey Mackay Quotes. <http://www.azquotes.com/quote/576654>
- [11]. Marshall John. <http://izquotes.com/quote/120316>
- [12]. Mohan Krishna, Meenakshi Raman. Effective English communication. New Delhi: Tata McGraw-Hill. 15th reprint, 2008, 84.
- [13]. Raman Meenakshi, Sangeeta Sharma. “Language Skills for Communication.” Technical Communication English Skills for Engineers. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2008, 90.
- [14]. Rochefoucauld, Francois de La. Francois de La Rochefoucauld Quotes. <http://www.Quotationspage.com/quote/28939.html>
- [15]. Schuller Robert. Robert Schuller Quotes. <https://www.goodreads.com/quotes/7683597-big-egoshave-little-ears>
- [16]. Tullich Paul. <https://clearingcustoms.net/2015/06/20/tracing-paul-tillichs-words-on-listening-and-love/>
- [17]. Turkish Proverb. <http://www.goodreads.com/quotes/7683556-if-speaking-is-silver-then-listening-is-gold>.