



# IIT Madras

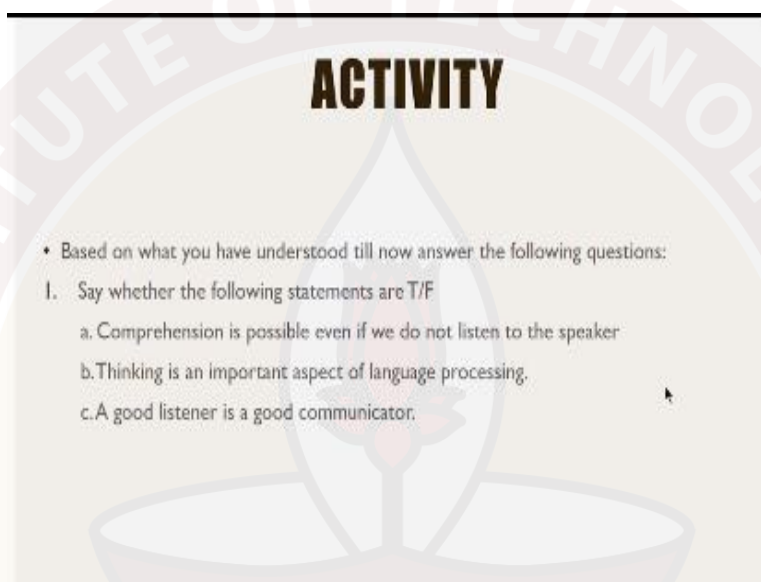
ONLINE DEGREE

**English - 1 (Basic English)**  
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**Lecture - 05**  
**Approaches to Listening**

Okay, now we are going to do an activity since we have been listening about listening. So let us do this short activity.

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**ACTIVITY**

- Based on what you have understood till now answer the following questions:
- I. Say whether the following statements are T/F
  - a. Comprehension is possible even if we do not listen to the speaker
  - b. Thinking is an important aspect of language processing.
  - c. A good listener is a good communicator.

Based on what you have understood till now answer the following questions. Say whether the following statements are true or false. Comprehension is possible even if we do not listen to the speaker. Thinking is an important aspect of language processing. A good listener is a good communicator. So I am giving you a few minutes.

Without actually looking at the content that we have transacted till now, see whether you can answer all these three statements. They are very simple. If you have been listening to me, I am sure you would have got it right. I hope you are done with this. Now I am going to play audio for you okay, which you have to listen to, and then answer questions. **(Audio Starts: 01:23).**

Listen to this short task on developing brain. Someone has just offered you a fresh jalebi. You hesitate and then say, no thanks. Turning down a hot jalebi surely

demands an explanation. So here are two. You heard the offer, saw the delicious item. Felt like reaching for it, but then remembered, you are on a diet, and you said no. Neurons behind your ears fired in response to the question.

Neurons in the back of your head and deep inside the brain responded to the sight and smell of the jalebi setting off neurons in other regions responsible for thought and emotion. Then neurons responsible for decision making fired just behind your forehead triggering a small set of neurons at the crown of your head. And you said, no. The two explanations are at different levels of psychological analysis.

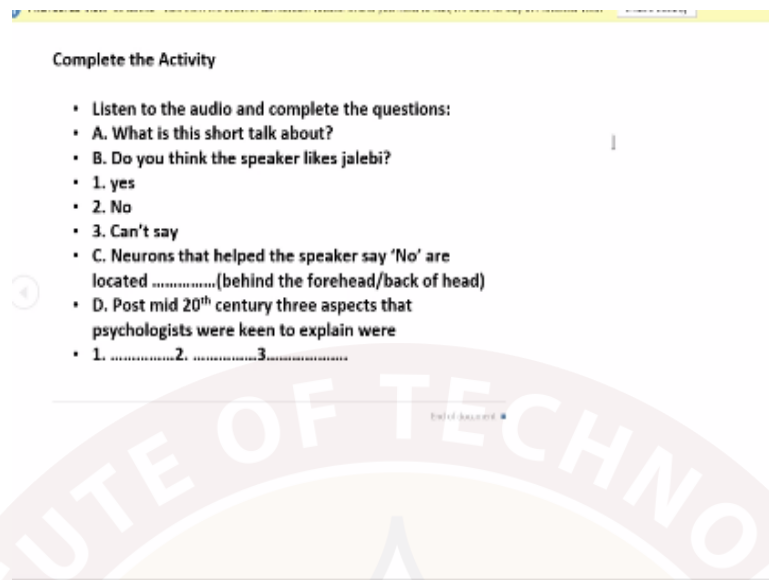
During the second half of the last century, mainstream psychology sought to explain human behaviour in terms of thoughts, feelings, and memories. Cognitive, developmental, social and other areas of psychology flourished along these lines. But all along, the brain was being studied too and with increasing sophistication. By the 1990s, it was actually possible to see and watch a live human brain using complicated scanning techniques.

This is neuroscience, and today it seeks brain-based explanations for everything we do and feel. When brain scans first began to be used in research, they confirmed that different parts of the brain are dedicated to different functions. Speaking, reading a word, comparing two numbers. Each of these is accompanied by a different pattern of brain activity. This by itself was not news.

Psychologists had already been studying the brains of dead people who had survived some brain injury during their life. Finding strong connections between the specific losses these people had suffered when alive and specific sites of brain damage. For example, stroke patients who had lost speech invariably had damage on the left side of the brain. And people with damage to the front of the brain invariably had shown poor control of their emotions.

But the new scanning methods are much more sophisticated. For one thing, some of them allow us to watch a living brain in action. Today, we can put your head in the scanner, show you a jalebi and watch while those pockets of neurons (**Audio Ends: 04:26**).

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Complete the Activity

- Listen to the audio and complete the questions:
- A. What is this short talk about?
- B. Do you think the speaker likes jalebi?
  1. yes
  2. No
  3. Can't say
- C. Neurons that helped the speaker say 'No' are located .....(behind the forehead/back of head)
- D. Post mid 20<sup>th</sup> century three aspects that psychologists were keen to explain were
  1. ....
  2. ....
  3. ....

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So now based on what you heard, I would like you to complete the attached worksheet. It has questions based on this recording. Without listening to it a second time, see how many questions you can answer. But if required, go ahead, play it a second time and see now how many questions you can answer. Now, this will actually tell you how you have focused on listening.

So we have been talking about listening for quite some time now. And I am sure by this time; it is kind of helping you to focus and pay attention to what at least I am speaking to you through these lectures. So you will realize that if you can translate all this into your real-life and pay attention, it definitely will help you do better in all walks of your life.

Listening is the one major thing that makes a difference between somebody who succeeds and somebody who actually finds it difficult.

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## BOTTOM UP PROCESS

- - Recognize words and clauses
- - Recognize key words
- - Recognize key transition words/phrases in a discourse/speech
- - Recognize grammatical relationships between key words in the sentence
- - Recognize the order in which words occur in a sentence

So let us now, so I hope you enjoyed doing the audio class where you had to listen to something and then answer the questions. Now let us go back if you remember to the bottom-up process. So how do you help yourself go through this process of listening from words to larger sentences, phrases, paragraphs and whole lot of chunk of spoken language? So the first step is for you to recognize words and clauses.

And then you have to recognize the keywords for each of the utterances. Then the transition words. For example, just know when I spoke, I said then, so then is a transition word. So after then, what comes is what we need to pay attention to. So if you are able to recognize the transition words, then it becomes easy for you to connect the words and phrases that follow. Then recognize grammatical relationships.

For example, prepositions on, in. So these will help you establish the relationships between keywords in the sentence. Then recognize the order in which words occur in a sentence. So is it the name of the person that comes first? Is it the action that the person is doing that comes first? So all these things, if you are able to pin down, then you are proceeding from the smallest chunk that is a word to a larger utterance.

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## TASKS THAT DEVELOP BOTTOM UP PROCESS

- Listening to positive and negative statements and choose an appropriate response. These are statements from a longer spoken discourse.

- Statement

Options

- a. That's a nice bag

Yes

No

- b. That's not a very good idea

Yes

No

- c. This tea isn't hot

Yes

No

So which are the tasks that help us develop this bottom-up process? So, for example, listening to positive and negative statements and choose an appropriate response. These are statements from a longer spoken discourse. So the statement could be, that is a nice bag. So you have the option to say yes or no. So this statement by itself may not make sense to you now.

But when it is a part of a larger discourse, then when you are asked questions like, say yes or no. So please understand that they are testing your bottom-up processing capability. That is not a very good idea. So if two of us are conversing about some idea on how to do a certain thing, and one of your friends says, Oh, I do not think that is a good idea. So what is not a good idea?

Then you go back to the conversation, and you try to identify what you had said, and which she is commenting on as not a very good idea, right? This tea is not hot. So when based on a spoken discourse, you are given statements to answer, then that is part of the bottom-up listening process.

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## ACTIVITY TO DEVELOP IDENTIFYING KEY WORDS

- Listen to the following:
- My town is a nice place to visit as it is close to a forest, there are lots of interesting short walks one can do before going into the deep. The town is surrounded by greenery.
- Task:
- Which of these words do you hear?
- Town, forest, walks, greenery, shops, countryside

So what are the activities that we can do to develop identifying keywords? Now listen, I am going to read out something, just pay attention to this. My town is a nice place to visit as it is close to a forest. There are lots of interesting short walks one can do before going into the deep. The town is surrounded by greenery. Now the little task that you have to do is you heard me out, right?

Which of these words did you hear? Did you hear town? Did you hear forest, walks, greenery, shops, countryside? So now here, I am specifically asking you to identify whether you heard specific words, right. So any such activity that you expose yourself where you are asked to listen to discourse and asked for specific words. Did you listen to this word? Yes or no?

Did you listen to this phrase? Yes or no? So these all are testing your ability to look for key words and that is what essentially happens in the bottom-up process.

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## ACTIVITY FOR TOP DOWN PROCESS

- Imagine I make the following statement to my friend;
- "I am going to the dentist tomorrow"
- The moment I say this a thought process is activated around "going to the dentist". This includes:
  - A setting (dentist office)
  - People there (the dentist, his assistant, the other patients)
  - Reason (to have a check up, filling, replacing a tooth)
  - Procedure (drilling, rinsing, injection)
  - Outcome (fixing the problem, pain, discomfort)

Now the other process, if you remember that I discussed last week, was top-down process. Imagine I make the following statement to my friend. I am going to the dentist tomorrow. The moment I say this, a thought process is activated around going to the dentist. This includes a setting.

You know a dentist, clinic or office, people there, the dentist, his assistant, the other patients, the reason why one goes to a dentist to have a checkup, filling, replacing a tooth and so many other things. The procedure drilling, rinsing, injection, not very happy thing to happen, right. And the final outcome, fixing the problem, pain, discomfort.

So the moment I say this, I am going to the dentist tomorrow it activates in your head, a whole lot of words and so many things around that situation, right? So these are the things that come to your mind.

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- The next day when I meet my friend I ask him:
- How was it?
- Fine, not as painful as I thought it would be.
- Without giving any background the two people involved in the conversation are able to understand what it is about as the listener understands what "going to the dentist" means.

And the next day when I meet my friend I ask him, how was it? Fine, not as painful as I thought it be. Says my friend. So now here, if you look at the question, how was it? It here is replacing how was the visit to the dentist. But since this whole discourse has happened the previous day, and there is a whole lot of process that has been set in motion, I do not have to really ask my friend, how was the visit to the dentist?

The moment he listens again, how was it, he is able to respond that I am referring to that conversation, which I had with him the previous day where I said that where he told me about his visit to the dentist, right. So he also replies fine, not as painful as I thought it would be. Without giving any background, the two people involved in the conversation are able to understand what it is about as the listener understand what going to the dentist means.

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## TOP DOWN PROCESS

- A listener who develops this ability can do the following:
  - Can use key words to construct the ideas involved in a conversation/discourse
  - Can infer the setting for a text
  - Can infer the role of the participants and their goals
  - Can infer cause and effect relationship
  - Can guess unsaid details of a situation/ guess
  - Can guess/anticipate questions related to a given topic

So this is what is the top-down process where a situation, so the moment I say that I am going to IIT, right, there is a whole lot of words, phrases, and the situation comes into play in the head of the speaker and in the head of the listener too. And if the listener is familiar with that situation, they will immediately start constructing the vocabulary, the sentences and the phrases related to this particular visit.

So let us look a little more at the top-down process. A listener who develops this ability can do the following. He can use keywords to construct the idea involved in a conversation or a discourse. For example, if I give you the word forest, so when you are applying the top-down process around, and I say that you get one minute to speak on this, right.

If you have in the past, been exposed to listening about forests, then you will be able to construct a whole lot of language around the forest. So that will come into play, and you will be able to talk about it. So he can infer the setting for a text. Can infer the role of participants and their goals. Can infer cause and effect relationship. Can guess unsaid details of a situation. Can guess or anticipate questions related to a given topic.

So if you are going for a lecture on let us say, the eroding you know the eroding oceans, for example. And you are a student who has studied about this. So you already know what kind of questions you need to ask what kind of questions you think would get answered when you go for such a talk.

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## ACTIVITY TO DEVELOP TOP DOWN PROCESS

- Imagine you are going to listen to a talk on Birds of India:
- Prepare a set of five questions which you think might get answered during the talk
- Read this conversation about "going abroad to study". You are provided with what the first person says, predict the speaker's part
- Text of first speaker:
- Speaker 1: Going abroad to study has become very common these days. Many students from India wish to go the US, Canada, or European countries for studies.
- Speaker 2: .....
- Speaker 1: Many students prefer the US the next destination is Canada these days and after that comes Australia and UK
- Speaker 2: .....

Now here is a little activity to develop the top-down process. Imagine you are going to listen to a talk on birds of India. So now, before I proceed, take a few minutes and prepare a set of five questions which you think might get answered during the talk. I hope you are ready with the questions. At some point, we will play a conversation or a talk on birds of India, and you can see whether all your questions get answered.

Now read a conversation about going abroad to study. Now, this is a very in topic. Everybody talks about going abroad to study. So now you are provided with what the first person says, okay. Predict the speakers part. So text of the first speaker is provided to you here, and you have to predict what the second speaker would say in response to what the first speaker has said, okay.

So this is how we develop the top-down process. So the speaker one says, going abroad to study has become very common these days. Many students from India wish to go to the US, Canada or European countries for studies. Now, what do you think the second speaker would have said in response to this? Again, I have for you the text of what the first speaker would have said. Many students prefer the US.

The next destination is Canada these days. And after that comes Australia, and the UK. So in response to this, what do you think speaker two would have said? So like this, you can actually continue this conversation where you are predicting what each speaker would say. There has to be a logical aspect of the conversation, right? So this is how we develop the top-down process of listening.

So for today, we end here, and I am sure you enjoyed doing a bit of activity where you listened to an audio. So I will come back with more activities for you next time. Thank you till then.

