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English-I (Basic English)
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Effective listening- Sample practice

Welcome. Today we are looking at sample effective listening. What we will do is actually listen to an audio and then have a little discussion post the listening. I have chosen for us an interesting audio, which is narration of a story-a musical story, a folktale from India, narrated by yours truly. Storytelling can be useful particularly with listening skill development as it lowers our anxiety and our stress and also is engaging. So, let us listen to this musical storytelling from India. It is called Mohini and Ajeevika.

Music Storytelling begins:

Mohini and Ajeevika - a folktale from India by Deepa Kiran. Come come listen listen everybody. Come come listen listen everybody. Just for you, I have a story, come come, come come come come. Welcome everybody. This is the story of a little girl called Mohini. Mohini love to sing and dance. That was her most favorite thing to do. She would go down to the sea and as she listened to the waves of the ocean, she would join in with the fishermen as they sang and danced.

And as she walked down home and she watched the women grinding the corn round and round, round and round, she sang along with them as well. And while she enjoyed her little songs and her dances and would come back slowly singing to herself, her grandmother would wait for her in worry- Edi Mohini, where are you gone I say? Come back home soon. How many times have I told you beware of the monster, Ajeevika! You know his powers.

If ever he comes down from the mountain, he will come and place his big hand on your head or my head or anybody's head. And I have told you so many times what will happen when he puts his hand on the head, the person will start laughing and laughing and laughing and laughing and they will laugh till they are so tired and finally, the monster Ajeevika will take you in one big gulp, uhpp and eat you up.

So, come back home fast, I say. Do not be out. And Mohini would come home and tell grandmother. Oh ho, Grandma. Why do you get so worried about Ajeevika? I am sure we can solve the problem. In fact, you know, Grandma, I have an idea. You know what I think we should do. Shut up, you little girl. What do you think? One small, 7 year old girl can solve the

problem of this monster? Go to sleep and come back early tomorrow. Oh ho! Okay, Grandma.

Mohini listened to her grandma sadly, and went to sleep. She was bursting to share her idea with someone and hoping that she could execute it and save all the people of her village from the monster Ajeevika. But nobody seemed to listen to her. So, one fine morning, she decided- all right, if nobody listens to my idea, I will go anyways, and go and meet the monster Ajeevika up in his mountain and see what I can do.

So off she set, and as always singing along. But as she walked up the mountain, she noticed things around her. Right on the floor of the mountain, there were all creepy crawlies, feeding on dead bodies. Oh my God. Is this what Ajeevika has done to people? So, many dead bodies around, half eaten. “Maybe I should go back”, Mohini thought to herself. But then she also remembered that she had faith in her plan. Oh, keep going Mohini. You can do this. You really can.

And she sang to build her courage. And finally, she reached the top of the mountain at the dark cave where Ajeevika lived. She went in and looked around. She could see nothing, hear nothing at all. Hello somebody here? Ajeevika, are you here? Hello? And she waited. And she waited and she started to think oh ho, maybe there is really no monster at all. Hmm. Hello?

And suddenly-who are you? Bum, Ajeevika’s voice, as tall as a coconut tree he was with fireball eyes and Mohini was so scared. What? I am Mohini and I have come to meet you, she said. Meet me? I do not meet people, I eat people, Ajeevika said. Please, just please wait. I heard that you dance very well. I wanted to know if you would dance with me Ajeevika. Dance? I do not know to dance. It is really simple. You can try with me. And so Mohini slowly coaxed Ajeevika to dance. Raise your hands up and put it down. It is simple.

Ajeevika Ajeevika Ajeevika Ajeevika and Ajeevika tried it with her- Ajeevika Ajeevika Ajeevika Ajeevika. He moved his hands up and down just like Mohini. Oh, that is wonderful, she clapped and danced with her jingles. One more time, let us try another step. Ajeevika Ajeevika, Mohini circled around and threw her hands in the air. And Ajeevika did the same. Ajeevika Ajeevika, he did. Oh, that is wonderful. Do you like the song?

I love it. It is a song on my name. I love it. Let us try some more. And so, they continue to dance at Ajeevika Ajeevika. Ajeevika Ajeevika. Ajeevika Ajeevika. Ajeevika Ajeevika. He

repeated every step of hers and finally Mohini danced the last step Ajeevika Ajeevika. She flung her hands in the air and put them right over her head. Ajeevika did the same- Ajeevika Ajeevika. And just as Ajeevika put his hands on his head, what happened?

Yes, of course, he began to laugh uncontrollably. He laughed and he laughed and he laughed and he laughed and he realized, oh my god, I am going to become tired and I do not know what this little girl is going to do to me. And so, he was laughing, but also afraid. And he laughed and he cried, and he laughed and he cried, and he laughed and he cried until he was so tired that finally he sat down at the bottom of a rock.

Mohini came, sat down on his shoulder and asked, Ajeevika, why do you eat my people? Well, because I feel hungry. She said, really is that it? Oh, do not worry. Come down to our village and we will feed you so well, you do not have to eat any of us. Really, is that a promise? Absolutely, my promise, come on. And so, Ajeevika put Mohini on his shoulder and together they went back to the village as friends who would no more eat each other, but meet, play and delight in their friendship.

Music Storytelling ends.

Well, that was a sample listening exercise that we did on effective listening. A story-an audio narration. What are the skills it required of us? Well, first and foremost, certainly focus and concentration to the listening task. We had to do it in an undistracted manner. By which I mean not being affected by noises and other distractions around, not getting carried away with something else that is happening or being told to us.

If you noticed, you were probably also a little relaxed as you listen to it, which is what happens with listening to stories. Anxiety and stress is relieved. Listening will certainly be more effective when we are able to handle, bring down or set aside our fears and anxieties and then approach the listening activity. What happens in this context of listening is also an important aspect called the predictive listening.

If you noticed, as you were listening, your mind was one imagining, creating visuals, getting a sense of what is actually happening. And also, it was simultaneously throwing up different options for what could be happening next. The mind was imagining, perhaps the sea, the village, the little girl Mohini. It was also imagining, now, what is going to happen? Who is going to meet whom? How is the interaction going to be? Is there going to be danger? Is there going to be success?

An important aspect of listening is also predictive listening. So, not only are we understanding and comprehending the text, we are also predicting where this might go, what might be the path or what might be the direction further of the text. When we fully engage with not only the focused listening, but also the process of prediction, it is a much deeper process of comprehension for as we listen, we are imagining and then as we predict, we are further imagining different options, the mind is activated, fired, focused on what is at hand and also now, it is curious-curious to know among these different options that I am predicting which might be the right one and therefore, there is an engagement with what is going to come next.

Therefore, there is also an openness and a reception to what is going to come next, to want to comprehend further. These are the few aspects of listening skills that we could take care with, keep in mind, enjoy and engage with, each time we listen. This episode was on sample effective listening. Here in, we addressed the need to stay focused and concentrate on what we are listening, be undistracted from the rest of the noises and other disturbances and interruptions, allow the anxiety to settle, fears to settle down so that we are more relaxed and open to receiving what we are listening to, to predict as we listen, to imagine and create in our minds what we listen to and based on the prediction, allow the curiosity to take us forward with the text as a more engaged listener and as a consequence, await with an open mind and open heart the responses and the next information in the text that comes through further listening.

All of these things could go a long way and maybe deeper as well and making listening a meaningful process. We are in a world today where listening is certainly high priority. A lot of the material that is available in print is also available in audio versions today. Be it podcasts, audiobooks and 80 percent of regular interactions is often speech. So, listening as a skill, whether it is our technical reading material, or on a day to day basis is always worthwhile growing and developing and improving on. Thank you.