

UNIT 4 Interpreting speakers' views, attitudes/attention



LEARNING OUTCOME:

At the end of this lesson, students should be able to:

1. identify feelings, intentions, etc, by listening out for various features in speech.
2. comprehend oral text by using features of speech

4.0 INTRODUCTION

When you are listening to somebody, completely, attentively, then you are listening not only to the words, but also to the feeling of what is being conveyed to the whole of it, not part of it.

4.1 Interpreting speakers' views, attitudes/attention

Recognising speaker's views, attitudes or intentions means being able to interpret other features of spoken discourse such as speech, inflections and speaker's choice of words. These features of spoken discourse will help you identify a speaker's feelings, intentions, attitude towards something, role and relationship to the listener.

4.2 Strategy 1

Listen out for and interpret other features of speech

Look at the following diagram for some of the features of spoken language.

Feature	Examples
Tone	shocked, irritated, weary, fearful, sympathetic, serious, sarcastic
Quality of voice	pleased, harsh, delighted, jealous, cold, tense, proud, friendly, indifferent
Rate of speech	fast, slow, normal, very fast, hesitant
Volume	Very loud, very quiet, loud, quiet, uneven

Features of spoken language will help us identify the speaker's:

i) Feelings

examples: *satisfaction, pleasure, concern, anger, regret, discomfort, shock, boredom, pride*

ii) Intention

examples: to falter, to advise, to persuade, to deceive, to convince, to threaten, to console

iii) Attitude towards subject matter

examples: mused, objective, biased, scornful, disinterested, interested, sympathetic

iv) Role

examples: friends, advisor, mentor, superior, parent, counsellor

v) Relationship to listener

examples: parent-child, victor-vanquished, employer-employee, director-actor

4.2 Strategy 2

Pay attention to words used.

Certain words can indicate the intention of the speaker. Of course, you will still need to consider the tone in which the words are spoken.

For instance:

I want... to demand I'd like... to request

Example:

[track 10](#)

Listen to the excerpt.

Can you detect the tone of the speaker's voice? Is she angry or happy?

Take note of the words that she used.

I want to see the manager at once. (demanding tone)

Don't lie to me. (angry and accusatory tone)

I insist on seeing him at once. (demanding tone)

The speaker is aggressive and demanding. She accuses the secretary of lying. She is obviously angry and upset over something.

Example:

track 11

Listen to the next excerpt.

What is the tone of the speaker's voice here? Did you notice that the tone was different? Did you also take note of her choice of words?

I'd like to see the manager, **please**. (polite tone)

Please. (pleading tone)

I'd just take up **a little of his time**. (meek and not aggressive)

I **really** have to see him. (begging tone)

Please. (pleading tone)

The speaker is meek and uncertainly not aggressive. She uses a pleading tone and sounds as if she is going to ask for a favour from the manager.

Example:

track 12

Listen carefully to the sentences and match each sentence with the likely speaker.

Speaker	Likely person
1	Teacher
2	Angry father
3	Host
4	Employer

1 – Employer; 2 – Angry Father; 3 – Girlfriend; 4 – Host; 5 - Teacher

Listening carefully to the tone, volume, rate of speech and choice of words can help you recognise a person's feelings, his relationship to the listener and sometimes, even his purpose.

Quick Review Quiz

<https://www.ieltsbuddy.com/guessing-meaning-from-context.html>

<https://study.com/academy/lesson/listening-for-intonation-cues.html>

Practice 1

Instruction: Recognize the author's tone to help you identify the reason why they are writing. Work in pair; A & B. A shall read aloud the text given and B will guess based on the way the text is read out. Take turns between A & B to complete the task.

The moment the words were out of my mouth, I wished I could take them back. I didn't mean to hurt Keith's feelings. He is such a nice person, and he certainly doesn't deserve to be treated so poorly. I guess the stress from my job has been more than I can handle. Instead of taking my problems out on him, I need to deal directly with the people who create the stress. If only I didn't care so much what people thought of me at work, then this would not have happened. The tone of the passage can be described as:

- ☐ funny
- ☐ regretful
- ☐ admiring

Alonzo winked at his mother's shocked gaze and with a smile he said, "sausage and pepperoni pizza for breakfast makes perfect sense. Allow me to demonstrate. You have your tomato. Tomato is technically a fruit. You have your cheese. Cheese is a dairy product. You have your crust... necessary carbs for quick energy in the morning. And don't forget the sausage and the pepperoni... my protein. If you think about it, it is just like bacon and eggs, toast, and orange juice." Still smiling, he added, "really, it is... well, almost." "Why are you looking at me that way?" The tone of this passage is:

- funny/humorous
- sad
- insulting

Whether you are starting or continuing on the academic road to success, there are a series of markers that will help keep you on the path. First, you must believe. Believe in yourself, believe in others, and believe in the process of life. You are here for a purpose. Second, keep an open mind. Be aware of things that are working and things that are not. Be willing to make changes. Third, know when you need help and be willing to ask for it. There are many people who can assist you; be specific when you ask for help. Fourth, use your resources: people, books, nature, experiences, events, travel-that which is seen and that which is unseen. Fifth, remember who you are and why you are here. Remind yourself what it is that you want to accomplish. Sixth, balance your life. There is a weariness that occurs when life's energies are out of harmony. Body, mind, and spirit need nurturing on a daily basis. Lastly, remember that storms never last. Which word best describes the author's attitude towards continuing on the "academic road to success"?

- optimistic
- neutral
- pessimistic
- doubting

The presentation was about to begin. The audience anxiously waited in their metal chairs and talked to one another about what they were going to learn.

The presenter walked to the front of the room, introduced herself. The audience clapped for the presenter. The presenter repeated what the audience already knew, that a passing quiz score on the information would be required by the end of the day for continued employment in the company. The audience immediately took out note pads and pens, tablets, and recorders. The presenter, then, pointed to the screen at the front of the room and pushed a button on her laptop. Suddenly, the screen went blank. The audience members shifted uncomfortably in their seats as the presenter worked to solve the problem. Some members of the audience tried to help. Phone calls were made by the presenter as the audience waited while looking nervously at their watches. The overall feeling of the paragraph can be described as:

- remorseful.
- apprehensive
- mocking
- vindictive

Practice 2

Instruction: Listen to three short excerpts.

Excerpt 1

From the speaker's tone of voice, you can infer that he is angry and fed up. The expressions such as 'Forget it' and 'I'm not sure I disagree with him' indicate this as well. From the words used (informal) and the way he speaks, it can also be concluded that the speaker is addressing someone of the same level as he is, probably a friend. The speaker is probably a teenager since he obviously still depends on his father's judgement.

Excerpt 2

This probably a dialogue between an employer and a young woman who is working for him. This can be concluded from the fact that he addresses her as 'My dear young lady' and proceeds to tell her that he might have 'to take serious action in this matter'. The tone of voice, kind but firm, also indicates

this. It is unlikely that this is a conversation between a father and daughter as the words used are rather impersonal and formal.

Excerpt 3

This is probably a telephone voice message from a wife to her husband. The haste with which she speaks and the fact that she does not seem to expect a response indicate that this is likely a voice message, and not a face-to-face conversation. From the use of the word *sayang* and 'on the way back from work', you can also conclude that she is probably speaking to her husband. This is further reinforced by the loving tone of voice used, which leads you to infer that she is speaking to someone of whom she is fond of.

The excerpts you have listened to clearly show that the different ways things are said- tone of voice, expressions used, who says what – does affect the meaning of the information conveyed. As such, listening carefully to the implied information as well as information directly stated will help you understand the recorded text better.

Add suggested link for further study/enrichment

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wm5d7c0xGt0>

References

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3. *Listening for intonation cues*. (n.d.). Study.com. <https://study.com/academy/lesson/listening-for-intonation-cues.html>
4. Guessing meaning from context - IELTS reading. (n.d.). IELTS buddy. <https://www.ieltsbuddy.com/guessing-meaning-from-context.html>
5. Richards, C. (2006). *MUET: A strategic approach*.

Answer key

Practice 1

1. regretful
2. funny/humorous
3. neutral
4. apprehensive

Practice 2

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