

## **Developing Listening Comprehension Skills of the Professional Students through Public Speeches**

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### **Abstract:**

The aim of the article is to identify how public speeches can be used to develop the listening comprehension skills of professional students. The present study is an attempt to find solution to the problem that hinders listening skills of learners. David Nunan (1989, p.23) refers to Anderson and Lynch (1988) and who distinguished reciprocal listening from non-reciprocal listening. “Non-reciprocal listening refers to tasks such as listening to the radio or a formal lecture where the transfer of information is in one direction only—from the speaker to the listener”. In addition to linguistic skills learners must have non-linguistic skills like knowing the purpose of listening, knowing the background knowledge and understanding the social and cultural aspects of the speech. The comprehension levels of the listeners will be improved if they know the background information before listening to the speech. The Questionnaires were given to students to test their comprehension levels. A comparative study of pre and post test will be done to assess their comprehension levels.

**Keywords:** Public Speeches, Reciprocal Listening and Non-Reciprocal Listening

**Introduction:**

The speech occupies a prominent place in the history and popular culture of any country. People have been speaking in public since humans first developed the ability to talk. Public speaking is a skill that everyone needs to learn. Almost every one of us is involved in public speaking in some form or the other in our lives, so we need to be prepared to do a good job when the time demands it. Being an effective public speaker uses the tools to make a difference in one's community, business, even in the world. Public speech is a medium of communication to communicate with a large number of people at a time.

**Public Speech**

*“Public speaking is a primary vehicle for recognizing individual identity even as a group of people seeks to share common ideas, values, action plans and identities”.*(Douglas, Ehninger and Alan. H. Monroe 2000.p.11)

“Public Speaking can be defined as a sustained formal presentation made by a speaker to an audience” (Sellnow, Deanna D. 2002.p.9). Public speech is a remarkable and well received communicative activity in a society to share ideas, views and opinions of people. It is one of the best ways to motivate a large number of people in a short period of time. If a person doesn't have any information, ideas and attitudes to share with others, he feels reluctant to talk to anybody. In this globalized world, one cannot stop himself/herself from communicating with others. He needs to exchange information, ideas, views to share his attitude with others to be successful in his professional forefront and personal life.

Speech is different from public speech. Public speech is a medium of communication to communicate with a large number of people in a formal way.

### **Aims and objectives:**

- To identify how background knowledge of the speech helps to enhance their comprehension levels.
- To develop the listening skills of the students.

### **Review of Literature**

Listening is the ability to identify and understand what others are saying. This involves understanding a speaker's accent or pronunciation, his grammar and his vocabulary, and grasping his meaning (Howatt and Dakin 1974). Byrne (1986, p.8) points out that "Oral communication is a two way process between speaker and listener (or listeners) and involves the productive skill of speaking and the receptive skill of understanding (or listening with understanding)".

According to C Paul Verghese (1989.p.71) "Listening as a skill is often said to be a passive skill while speaking is described as an active one. This is not wholly true for listening is also an active skill as it is concerned with decoding a message and understanding it; moreover the listener has to show that he has or has not understood the message from his response".

Nunan (1998, p.1) believes that:

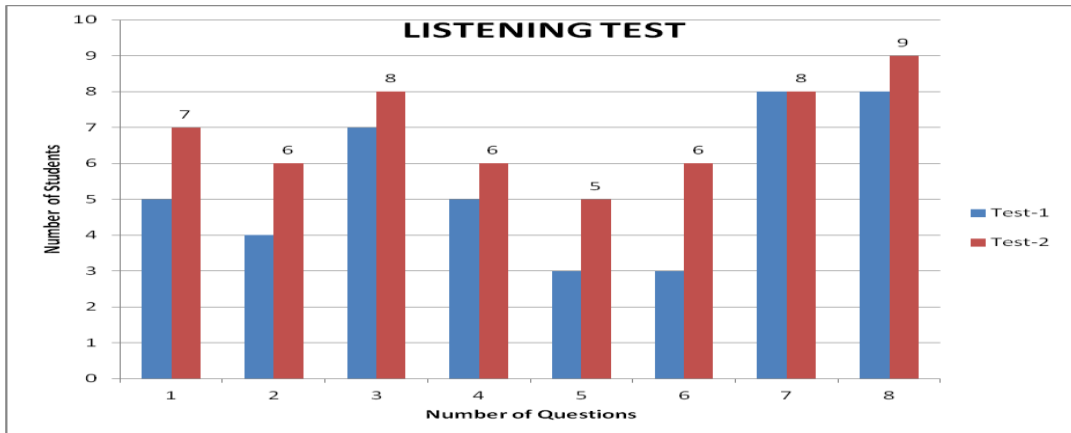
Listening is the basic skill in language learning. Without listening skills, learners will never learn to communicate effectively. In fact over 50% of the time that students spend functioning in a foreign language will be devoted to listening. . .

It is noteworthy to mention the types of listening and the limitations of non-reciprocal listening for the present work. David Nunan (1989, p.23) refers to Anderson and Lynch (1988) and who distinguished reciprocal listening from non-reciprocal listening. Reciprocal listening refers to those listening tasks where there is an opportunity for the listener to interact with the speaker, and to negotiate the content of the interaction. Non-reciprocal listening refers to tasks such as listening to the radio or a formal lecture where the transfer of information is in one direction only-from the speaker to the listener. In addition to linguistic skills learners must have non-linguistic skills like knowing the purpose of listening, knowing the background knowledge and knowing the social and cultural knowledge skills.

## **Methodology**

The researcher has taken 10 students as sample and who were studying first year B.Tech. A comparative study of pre and post test will be done to assess their comprehension levels. The comprehension levels of the listeners will be improved if they know the background information before listening to the speech or not. The researcher played native speech (Kiran Bedi) to test their listening comprehension as part of testing. Two questionnaires were prepared with consist of eight questions each. The individual analysis will be done based on the results.

## Analysis



### Comparison of Test-I & Test-II

Pre and post tests have been conducted to see how the background knowledge of the speech helps to improve their listening comprehension levels. It is evident that, there is improvement in the results of students. The difference of score obtained in test-I and test-II showed clear evidence that students showed improvement after being exposed to the background of speeches.

### Findings

1. When students are tuned to the speeches, their comprehension levels are automatically increased.
2. Audio-visual speech played a crucial role to know the background of the speech such as the venue, number of audience, the period in which it was delivered. Physical presence of the speaker and his/her non-verbal communication in the audio-visual had an impact on the listening comprehension of the students.

3. Learners liked to watch an audio-visual speech than listening to an audio speech.  
When students are watching a video speech, they can easily understand the background of the speech.
4. Some students are not able to comprehend the vocabulary of the speech and it affected the listening comprehension levels of the students.
5. There is a gradual improvement in the performance of the students in listening test.

## Conclusion

The present study has attempted to identify how the background knowledge of the public speeches helps to develop the listening skills of the students. Public speeches can be utilized as a teaching material and as a language learning source/tool to develop communication skills of the students. Speech is not to be considered as history, it can be used as a tool to enhance the future of students of English.

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