

Developing Listening and Speaking Skills of Intermediate Students

Gundla Praveen Kumar, M.A., M.Phil.

**Ph.D. Research Scholar, Dept. of English
University College of Arts and Social Sciences**

Osmania University, Hyderabad

gpkumar1983@gmail.com

=====
Abstract

The present study is an experimental research undertaken with twenty intermediate students who are studying in Government Junior college, Aliya, Gunfoundry, Hyderabad. The experimental group was tested by being provided with audio clips (for listening skills), and having their speech recorded (for speaking skills). All the findings and conclusions are based on the responses of the students. Test material (audio clips) was prepared based on the level of the students, specially restricted to the segmental or word level. The word-level restriction is for understanding the listening and speaking skills as they are interdependent skills in the language development of the learners.

Keywords: Listening – Speaking – Intermediate – Cinderella skill

Introduction

Regular teaching methods lay more emphasis on the productive (speaking and writing) skills than on the receptive (listening and reading). Especially among the receptive skills, listening is the Cinderella in the second language teaching and learning in majority of the outer circle countries in Braj Kachru's categorisation (Kachru, 1985: 366-67).

Due to the negligence of this skill, the majority of the second or foreign language learners are exhibit incapability in the productive skill i.e. speaking—an inevitable cascading effect. Speaking is one of the major skills to maintain the social interaction. The fact some people being deaf-and-dumb is based on the inability to listening. If a listener is unable to listen, he or she may be unable to speak. So listening and speaking are interdependent skills as reading and writing. Nunan's (1991) top-down and bottom-up methods and Fields' (2002) Pre-listening, Listening, and Post-Listening activities were stressed on the way of improving listening skill in the second language learning. Speaking involves pronunciation, intonation, grammatical accuracy and fluency. Speaking is closely associated with listening, and it is the basic model to internalize the rules of the language. The ephemerality of speech, together with the features of spoken English—inconsistent sentence construction, incomplete forms, false beginnings, and the use of unnecessary pauses—undoubtedly blocks EFL learners' comprehension and influences the development of their speaking abilities.

Aim of the Present Study

The aim of the present study is to see whether the students of Intermediate who are studying in Government College, Aliya, Gunfoundry, Hyderabad are able to listen the words played on a computer and respond by reproducing the same words asked. These two tasks are for checking the listening ability and examining the speaking skills.

Literary Review

Witkin (1990) says that the chief problem of facing the field of listening is the lack of a generally agreed upon definition of listening. Therefore in India too, many researchers have been attempting on the listening skill in the class-room situations, but it is still in the process of coming to a definite, concrete analysis of it objectively.

Watson and Smeltzer (1984) observe that the speaking skill has yet to be developed owing to many reasons. Lack of confidence is one such reason for affective nature in speaking skill.

Selection of the Students or Respondents

The present study selected twenty students who are studying Intermediate in Government Junior College, Aliya, Gunfoundry, Hyderabad. All the students are good at speaking and understanding English.

Data Collection

Initially, all the responders were asked to listen to a list words played and then to speak them aloud. All the words were played in a computer assisted audio speakers. Each word would be played only once in regular interactions, we may not expect any repetition and the instructor asked the respondents to note down on a paper for the words to be read aloud afterwards to check their speaking ability.

Data Analysis

Data analysis is done based on the crucial examination of conducting a listening test by using computer assisted audio speakers and auditory analysis will be performed by the researcher based on the speaking of the listened words by the listeners.

Word List for Testing Listening and Speaking Skills

<i>Computer</i>	<i>Bags</i>	<i>Pencils</i>	<i>Wanted</i>	<i>Phone</i>
<i>Late</i>	<i>Fee</i>	<i>Examinations</i>	<i>Buses</i>	<i>Easy</i>
<i>Player</i>	<i>Food</i>	<i>Car</i>	<i>Judges</i>	<i>Benches</i>
<i>Teacher</i>	<i>Mother</i>	<i>Fame</i>	<i>Plumber</i>	<i>Intermediate</i>

Observations of the Tests

The researcher keenly involved in the observation of the listening and speaking tests. While playing the audio clips to the listeners, the majority of the listeners were not very attentive even though they were asked to focus on the session. This indicates that in a majority of the intermediate colleges in Telangana, students are not giving the required priority and training to listening activities. This is inevitably reflected in speaking and it may be revealed in the results of the tests.

Results of the Listening and Speaking Tests (1 to 10)

Respondents →	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Word-List↓										
Computer	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Late	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✗
Player	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
Teacher	✗	✓	✗	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✗	✓
Phone	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
Bags	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Fee	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Food	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Mother	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Easy	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Pencils	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Examinations	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓	✗	✓	✗	✓
Car	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Fame	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Benches	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓
Wanted	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
Buses	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
Judges	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗
Plumber	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
Intermediate	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

The (✓) stands for listening and speaking done accurately and ✗ stands for listening and speaking done inaccurately

Results of the Listening and Speaking Tests (11 to 20)

Respondents →	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
Word-List↓										
Computer	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓
Late	✗	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	✓	✗	✓	✗
Player	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
Teacher	✗	✓	✗	✓	✗	✗	✓	✗	✗	✓
Phone	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
Bags	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Fee	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Food	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓
Mother	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Easy	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Pencils	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Examinations	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓	✗	✓	✗	✓
Car	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓
Fame	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Benches	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓
Wanted	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
Buses	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
Judges	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗
Plumber	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
Intermediate	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Discussion of the Results of the Listening and Speaking Test

All the respondents listened and spoke the words *bags, fee, mother, easy, pencils* and *intermediate* accurately. They did not experience any difficulty in listening and speaking these words. All the respondents listened and but spoken the words *player, phone, wanted, buses,* and *plumber* inaccurately. They were confused with these words when they listen. Some speakers listened and spoke some words accurately. These are *computer* by all the respondents except respondent 15 and 18; *late* by respondents 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 12, 13, 14, 17, and 19; *teacher* by 2, 4, 5, 7, 8, 10, 12, 14, 17 and 20; *food* by all respondents except respondent 15 and 18; *examinations* by 5, 6, 8, 10, 15, 16, 18 and 20; *car* by all except 15 and 18; *fame* by all except respondent 1 and 11; *benches* by all except respondent 4, 7, 14 and 17; and *judges* by all except respondent 5, 10, 15 and 20. Respondent 15 and 18 mispronounced majority of the words. Researched identified the insertion of /Y/ at the end of the word in these respondents.

The researcher asked all the respondents about their failures in speaking some words inaccurately, they said that they have been facing difficulty in listening and speaking those words due to the newness in pronunciation and they listened to these words from their teachers in an Indian variety of English. So this is the hypothesis of the present paper. Respondents are ready to take the challenges in learning a new way of English, but they are not being trained in the way they desire. My research demonstrates that if the teaching met all these requirements, they would perform in a better way.

Conclusion

All the conclusions are drawn based on the study. The study revealed that majority of the intermediate students failed in speaking accurately to a set of limited words due to ill attention towards listening. This is the very reason of their inability in articulation of few words inaccurately and few are in accurately. If this is continued to further level, we may see more failures in the academic learning and professional advancing. Hence the researcher concludes that listening plays a crucial role in speaking and listening and speaking are the interdependent skills in language development of the intermediate students. Based on the time and availability, the present study is restricted to the segmental level. However, it is further recommended to study the suprasegmental features and communicative abilities of the learners of intermediate and higher level too.

References

- Anderso, A., & Lynch,T.(1988). *Listening*. Oxford: Oxford University Press
- Brown, G. (1990). *Listening to spoken English*. 2nd ed. London: Longaman.
- Bygate, M., & White, R. (1978). The use of semi-scripted simulated authentic speech and listening comprehension. *Audio Visual Language Journal* 16(3).
- Comfort, J. (2008). Pamela Rogerson. *Speaking Effectively*. Cambridge University Press Pvt. Ltd.
- Field, J. (2002). The Changing Face of Listening. In J. Richards & W. Renandya (Eds.), *Methodology in Language Teaching: An Anthology of Current Practice* (Approaches and Methods in Language Teaching, pp. 242-247). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. doi:10.1017/CBO9780511667190.033

- Hewings, M. (2009) *English Pronunciation in Use*. Cambridge University Press Pvt. Ltd.
- Kachru, B. B. (1985). Standards, codification, and sociolinguistic realism: The English language in the outer circle. In: Quirk, R. and H. Widdowson, (eds.) *English in the World: Teaching and Learning the language and the literature*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Krashen, S. (1982). *Principles and practice in second language acquisition*. Oxford: Pergamon.
- Krishnamohan & Bannerji, M. (2000). (First Edition Reprint). *Developing Communication Skills*. Macmillan India Ltd.
- Larry R. Smeltzer & Kittie W. Watson (1984) Listening: An empirical comparison of discussion length and level of incentive, *Central States Speech Journal*, 35:3, 166-170, DOI: [10.1080/10510978409368184](https://doi.org/10.1080/10510978409368184)
- Mendelsohn, D. (1994). *Learning to listen*. San Diego: Domine Press.
- Nunan, David. (1991). *Language Teaching Methodology: A Textbook for Teachers*. New York: Prentice - Hall, Inc.
- Roach, P. (2008). (Third Edition). *English Phonetics and Phonology*. Cambridge University Press Pvt. Ltd.
- Rost, M. (1994). *Introducing Listening*. London: Penguin.
- Ryburn, W. M. (1961). Bombay: *The Teaching of English*. Oxford University Press.
- Verma, S. K. (1974). (CIEFL, Hyderabad). *Introduction to English Language Teaching*. Oxford University Press Madras.
- Watson, Kittie W.; Smeltzer, Larry R(1984). Barriers to Listening: Comparison between students and practitioners. *Communication Research Reports*. Dec1984, Vol. 1 Issue 1, p82-87. 6p
- Widdowson, H. G. *Teaching Language as Communication*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987.
- Witkin, B. R. (1990). Listening theory and research: The state of the art. *Journal of the International Listening Association*, 4, 7 – 32.
- =====