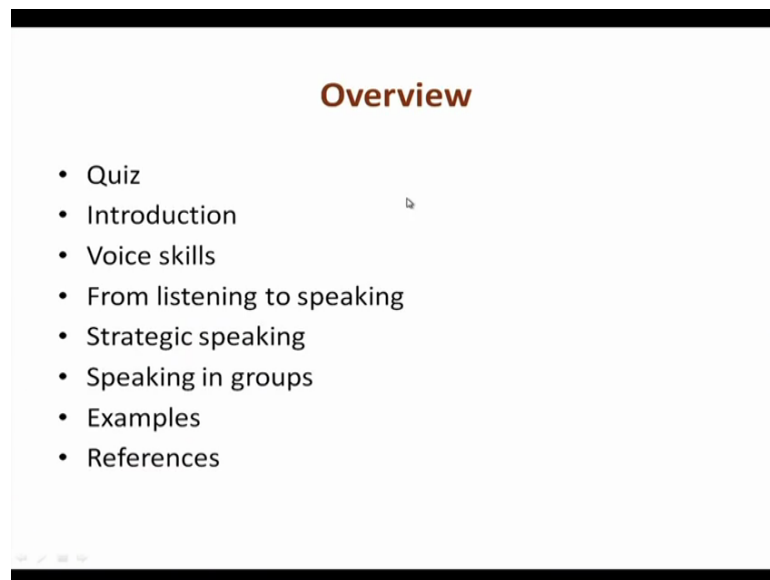


**Soft Skills Development**  
**Prof. P. Patnaik**  
**Department of Humanities and Social Sciences**  
**Indian Institute of Technology, Kharagpur**

**Lecture – 04**  
**When to Speak and How**

Hello friends. So, today we are going to speak about speaking skills - When to Speak and How. Now, the point is that when we are talking about something like this the area is vast, and if you are going to speak about it for 30 minutes then probably we are not going to do it justice. So, we will make it an interactive session. What we are going to do is as you proceed with this lectures and as you proceed with what I am going to share with you kindly take note of the discussion forum as well as the slides that we have provided which will have a number of links, surveys, activities and all that and as well as some reference material. And if you use that probably we will be able to do justice to this particular topic.

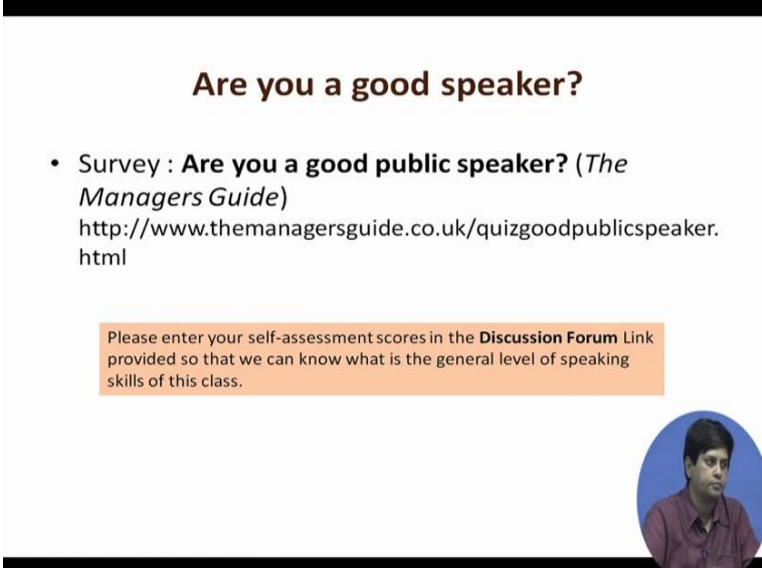
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Now, as in the earlier cases here is an overview of what we able to do; the first thing is to find out how good we are at speaking skills, so that is the quiz and I will be providing you with the link and I expect you to go there and test it out for yourself. Right now once and may be at the end of the course once again to find out where you stand, I will be introducing the concept of what exactly we mean by speaking, we will be looking at

voice skills, the moment from listening to speaking, strategic speaking, in groups, few examples and then the reference material which I am using will be made available as well as some relevant articles which you might find interesting as well as my lecture notes or lecture slides and other relevant references.


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**Are you a good speaker?**

- Survey : **Are you a good public speaker?** (*The Managers Guide*)  
<http://www.themanagersguide.co.uk/quizgoodpublicspeaker.html>

Please enter your self-assessment scores in the **Discussion Forum** Link provided so that we can know what is the general level of speaking skills of this class.



So, here is your quiz: Are you a good speaker and you can just answer 8 questions we are going to this link and then we can find out where you stand. And as I told you again and again these are just indicators they do not finally tell you anything in a definitive way, but they at least give you an indication as to where you stand and the context of the various skills that we are discussing over these lectures.

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**The relevance of listening**

**Before you speak:**

- Make eye contact
- Non-verbal gestures and expressions
- Avoid showing signs that you are distracted
- Ask questions
- Paraphrase or clarify
- Make a smooth transition from listening to speaking



Now, the relevance of listening that is the first thing we are going to do. The relevance of listening is something which we have highlighted in the last section when we talked entirely about listening, but there also I made a few points about the fact that listening and speaking cannot really be separated. So, what we do is we take care of these things before we do we start communicating with anybody making eye contact is very important especially when we are talking about communication at a physical level or even over Skype if you are talking to somebody long distance. Non-verbal gestures and expressions: those have to be very much there very visible and you must be aware of what exactly they are doing now this is something which we will elaborate when we deal with body language, but in this particular lecture as well as the next one we will be touching on upon some of these issues.

The third one is that avoiding the tendency to get distracted or so distracts. I remember many occasions where I am talking to somebody and that person is may be working on a computer or reading something, fine this person is listening to me his nodding and all that, but as long as I have not got the complete eye contact, complete attention you often feel neglected or you feel that probably the other person is not listening to you properly. So, it is very important to communicate with the other person that when you are listening to that person obviously, I am probably going to respond after that and probably you are responding at that very moment through your non-verbal communication, eye contact and giving attention full total attention becomes very very significant.

Now here I would like to share with you some of the very interesting things, I have realized in the context of giving attention to somebody is the fact that we live in a world of multi tasking where we very often love to do two things, three things together driving a car and talking over a mobile phone, talking to somebody and looking at the computer things like that or looking at the mobile and speaking with somebody these are things which are pretty regularly done.


But research suggests that we are actually very poor multitaskers what basically happens is that when we give something our total attention, our ability to perform, our ability to network the information, our ability to remember and complete, whatever completely understand and to communicate is enhance to a very significant extent. Now in order to do that; obviously, it is very important that you do one thing at a time and a lot of research tells us that actually we are not multitaskers we shift we switch between two tasks when we do that the efficiency level significantly goes down.

Asking questions is very important because that is way of checking whether you have got the information correct or not. Asking questions also is a way of showing your concern your interest that is again relevant. And when we have done all these things you can make a very easy and smooth transition from a performing one role let us say the role of a listener to the role of a speaker, because you see that you have done everything to catch or grab the other person attention and now she is or he is ready to listen to you when you speak because it is a mutual interdependent process and you have already done your part of the job. So, in a way indirectly you are also pressurizing the other person to listen to you because you are done the same thing for that person. So, that is very very important and once this part of the thing is over we move from listening to speaking.

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**From listening to speaking**

- Listen for conversation control – seek first to understand and then to be understood
- Unsolicited advice – what not to speak
- My story vs. her story – when and if to shift focus
- The “I” habit – talking about ourselves
- Questions – specific and clarifying



You see that we have already talked about the transition we have made the transition and here are few things you need to keep in mind when you are moving switching from listening to speaking. Listen for conversation control: what I mean to say is that very often we are impatient to talk, we are impatient to speak. And even when somebody has barely stopped talking we start speaking, we are always short of time we are always in a hurry, we do not have enough time to listen to complete information. Well, it is true of our situation it is true of our circumstances. But then probably it is a good idea even then in spite of that to listen completely. That reduces a significant amount of confusion, that reduces the cognitive load it increases comprehension, and I have had a personal feeling that when I do that that particular days much more coordinate cogent comprehensive then other days where I am not doing that as a practice the thing the transition automatically becomes smooth because when you speak you are speaking with the complete information in a much more meaningful way.

Unsolicited advice: now we will talk about that when we talk about gender, but this is a tendency we have and very often in the Indian cultural context we jokingly say that the moment you talk about a disease or a small ailment you find that there are 5, 10, 30 different let us say advice's as to how to solve that problem take this take that take this home remedy, take that kind of a medicine and all kinds of a things. So, you see that the tendency to give advice is very very easy and it can be irritating very often it is not necessary. And in the context of soft skills in the context of making good contact one

needs to be very careful when one is expected to give advice and probably at other points of time it is not a good idea to do.

So, my story versus her story: the moments somebody speaks and tells an anecdote I remember 5 other anecdotes. Now, I am impatient to tell this person about my anecdotes. This impulse is very common and very often we get impatient with the other person we hardly give the other person enough time to stop speaking before we start off with our story. Now two things happen over here; one is the other person feels neglected offended although he or she may not directly voice that and this space for the simple reason that the person feels that his or her case has not been made or you have not listened to him properly. The other is that now you are imposing another story whether he wants it or not.

So, it is important to find out whether you actually sharing anecdotes in which context that is relevant or if your anecdote is really related and it is actually going to aid the communication process somebody is giving an example you are giving another example may be agree with that person, but those context it makes sense, but in other context may be not. And you see that very often you want to shift the focus to the other person, if you are a good listener and that makes you a good speaker by the way, you are more interested about the other person you ask definitely speaking. But in the process you are learning a lot about the other. See giving information about ourselves is ego centric kind of a thing most cases. We want to brag about ourselves we want to show off about ourselves or we want to at least assert that we are important now that is when we speak about ourselves.

But in most circumstances it is more important to learn about the other person and that is something which is very very important and very often overlooked because of these tendencies. Now talking about the habit that is related to the point I was making right now, talking about ourselves. And when we do that the talk is something which becomes one sided and very often might flag it might get boring for the other person might get dull. So, well I may talk about myself, but if I am able to link it with the other person in a significant way that becomes relevant.

Questions: we test upon questions in the earlier slide, but we are elaborating a little what kind of questions that specify questions, that clarify questions, that lead in a specific

direction questions which are based on your earlier observation and assessment of the particular person so that now you know exactly what you are going to ask why because very often in business talks we start off with a kind of an ice breaker you get to know that person and this assessment where you are learning about the person is very important because the information might be the same, but how you are going to position the information, how you are going to talk about that information, how you are going to share that information becomes very very important. You might share that information with an illustration, you might give that information with an open ended question, and you might assert that this information is relevant.

Now depending on the kind of person the other one is the kind of opening statements he has made or she has made your responses will be appropriately geared to those contexts. And it is in this question this context that questioning very indirectly, very politely, becomes significant because you get to know about the other person. And whether we are talking about professional life or whether we are talking about personal life these are significant.

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**Speaking in formal groups**

- Listen first
- Seek openings – physical and conceptual
- Wait for pauses and breaks
- Use non-verbal gestures – to intervene and then to continue
- Assertion vs. aggression
- When in Rome act like Romans

Now, you see that you might tell me that we have been talking about let us say speaking and listening in the inter personal context we have been talking about context which are almost you might say therapeutic or almost spiritual, well that is not the case, what I have been trying to share with you is the fact that if you are really genuinely doing

something where that makes us very good at that and actually helps us. So, that is how we had been talking about the context, we had been talking about listening earlier when we were talking about the relationship between listening and speaking and how it influences us. But there are other contexts and here is one which I would touch upon quickly which is speaking in formal groups. I will be having some video clips; I will be linking you to certain YouTube videos as well as my personal videos where I would be showing you examples of speaking in formal contexts. And I will be asking you few questions like puzzles or quizzing you and that would be integrated of course, with the course. And when you do that you would be able to realize that this is relevant, what we are going to do right now which is the context the formal context where we speak.

However, that is not the highlight and of this particular course, but then none the less as I share with you we would be doing a little bit of linking of with YouTube videos and some activities over there which relate to group especially, group discussions. And I am touching upon group discussions over here because I feel that some of you might face formal group discussions not actually speaking in groups, but for may be evaluation for recruitment of a selection to some kind of a course and that is the context for which I have a few tips which I would like to share with you.

The first thing which I have been highlighting again and again is listening very carefully. This time critically, quickly to assess and evaluate people, to schematize their attitude towards the entire thing and then you see openings. The opening can be physical, opening where somebody is actually taking a breath there can be conceptual openings or various kinds opening where somebody has made a point and you feel that. Now you can after accessing the thing make an additional point, opening where you find that the person almost has come, but not giving way you have scope for rebuttal, opening where you want to make friends with somebody and be in total agreement, opening where you analyze the points made by earlier people to assimilate them together you would be looking for such openings and when you get those openings you speak.

Wait for pauses and breaks again I have already covered that when I am talking about physical openings, but you see that when this things do not work use non-verbal gestures in a significant way raise your hand to indicate that you would like to speak, when that does not work use body language not communicate, and when that does not work then you intervene intervenes forcefully strongly if required; because this things happen and



there everybody is vying for a chance to speak and to dominate. So, in this kind of a situation we will have to use nonverbal communication to make friends to make gestures you have which suggest that you either agree or disagree obviously, politely. And these are some of the things we will touch upon when we do non-verbal communication and to assert as I told you as supposed to be aggressive.

And the last point which I would like to make because this goes a gives the grain of what I have been sharing about speaking and listening all this while is when in Rome act like Romans. What it basically means is that you have group discussions where people are not listening to one another it is like a fish market everybody is shouting. Now if you keep quiet over there you are losing out you have to struggle you have to fight you have to also be aggressive not just assertive if it is required.

You have a group discussion where everybody is quiet everybody is cerebral talking in a focused way well you behave in that particular way. So, when you a lot talking about formal contexts and speaking in these kinds of context these are kind of role place these are genuine conversations, these are more or less situations where you are being asked to prove yourself. In these contexts you forget the paradigms of forget the examples the illustrations the guidelines which we have been discussing until this point about empathy about understanding other people about compassion feelings and emotions and act in a very different way.

So, that is why I felt that I should talk about it separately as a distinctive the kind of thing in the context of conversation group, discussion and things like that and in one of the later lectures Professor Giri would be talking about the different theoretical dimensions in the context of speaking in groups so that will add to your inputs. However, if you want to have if you add additional material you can always check out the resources that I will be sharing with you.

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### **Gender in listening and speaking**

- Men focus on status, try to dominate – women attempt to create connections
- Women often feel men are not listening – they tend to give solutions, while women often want to build up relation
- Understanding – symmetrical; advice – asymmetrical
- Women often use 'sorry' in an empathetic sense, which can be misunderstood by men

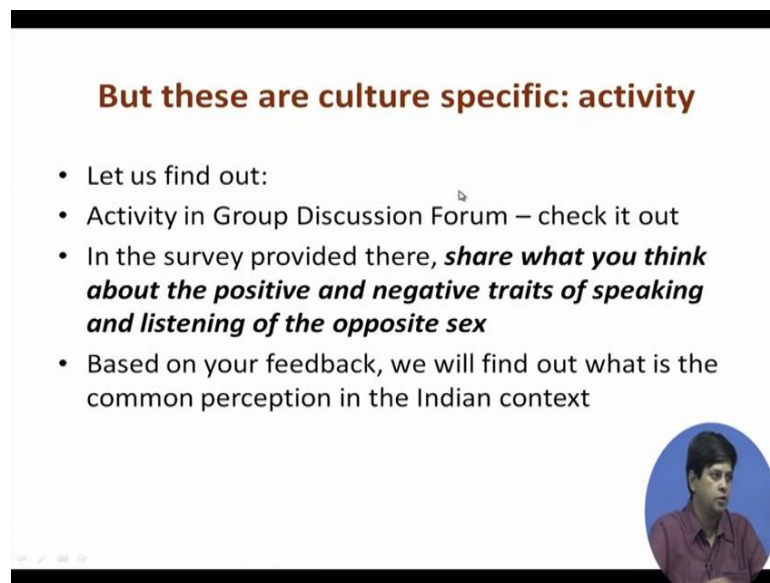
Now, we come to gender and listening and speaking. Now here I would just like to share with you some of the things which little bit of research has brought forward, but the fun part of it would be to do it together. Now you see that there is a feeling that men and women interact in different ways socially, there is a feeling that men tend to be more aggressive and focus on status try to present that kind of a thing, whereas and try to dominate essentially. Whereas, women attempt to create connections and this can be misleading when men and women are talking because the intentions are misinterpreted; now there is a possibility we will talk about that.

Women often feel that men are not listening, because men the moment they listen and hear that a woman is talking about a problem immediately attempts to give a solution. Now these are kind of you might say stereotype persons of things, but probably they happen now that the question is whether they actually happen or not is something which we will try to find out together. So, you find that women very often do not want solutions women want sharing maybe they want you to listen to them carefully rather than immediately try to give a solution to that problem.

So, understanding when we are talking about understanding one and another relationship or the communication is symmetrical and when we are giving advice it becomes a symmetrical, because somebody is trying to dominate over the other or so a sense of superiority about the other. And again another thing which people say is misinterpreted

his women saying sorry which does not really mean that they feel bad about having done something wrong, but they feel bad about the situation. So, this is again very often misinterpreted. So, what we are going to do is we are trying to find out whether actually this happens.

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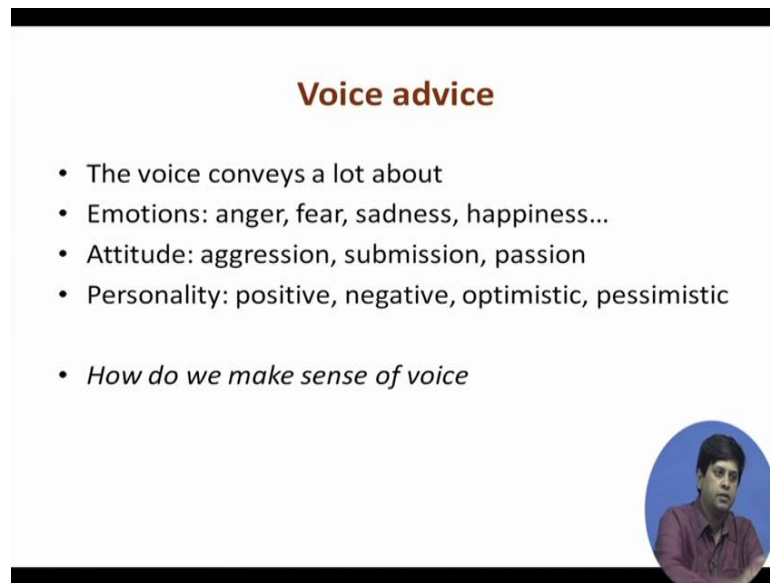


**But these are culture specific: activity**

- Let us find out:
- Activity in Group Discussion Forum – check it out
- In the survey provided there, ***share what you think about the positive and negative traits of speaking and listening of the opposite sex***
- Based on your feedback, we will find out what is the common perception in the Indian context


So, one of the things which we are going to do as an assignment would be to have a quick survey, we will have a set of questions which will relate to gender and the way you perceive the other gender response and within a week we will have the results. Now that is a very scientific and I would say very academic way of trying to find out and I would say very reliable way of trying to find out what is happening in the Indian context whether the points I made right now actually hold true or not. We might discover a few new points. So, the moment this talk is over we will try to see where we are in this particular context.

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**Voice advice**

- The voice conveys a lot about
- Emotions: anger, fear, sadness, happiness...
- Attitude: aggression, submission, passion
- Personality: positive, negative, optimistic, pessimistic
  
- *How do we make sense of voice*



Voice and advice about the voice and tone; now that again is if big field, it is a large field voice training is something which I cannot obviously, do within the next 2 to 3 minutes or 5 minutes, but I can link you up I can share a couple of recommendations about books which you can follow for doing that, I can link you off with certain YouTube's which will give you some ideas about that we can also conduct a survey I have that in mind which will tell us, because I will give you certain sounds or certain speech patterns and we will find out what exactly is conveyed. So, that is again something where we will learn by ourselves how significantly the different dimensions of voice managed to communicate different meanings or different information.

Now, when we talk about the voice what exactly are we talking about, you can hear me that is fine you can obviously, know that an Indian is speaking as supposed to maybe a non Indian person even some of you might be able to locate me in the eastern part of India now that is because of my intonation, my pronunciation of words, the way I draw out certain words, with the way I substitute certain sounds for other sounds which belonged to my native tongue.

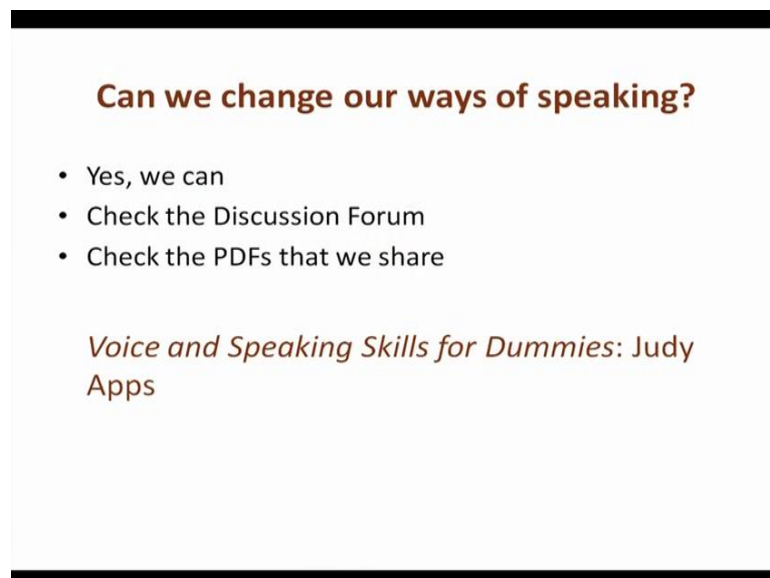
So, these are the ways we are able to identify about the speaker, but if we go beyond that we are able to identify a lot of other things as well for instance emotions: how do we identify it is anger, fear, sadness, happiness, through voice now this is an open ended question and will conduct a small as I told you survey with voice clips for us to find it

out. So, this is a collaborative of effort we are going to do it together, you and me together and my team our team over here we will work together and we will try to find the answer to this within a week. So, please do not forget that.

Attitude: when we talk about let us say aggression, submission, passion, super sense of superiority things of that kind of attitude now that also gets reflected in voice. I will try to again find out how that happens when we do it together personality gets reflected. So, you see that we are taking an aggregate of these emotions and attitudes a personality is something which is considered to be stable.

So, if we see certain repetitions of this patterns over and over again consistently over a period of time then we attributed we kind of developed a framework ok somebody is speaking aggressively again and again whatever that means, maybe a loud voice emphasis on specific words quick not listening to other people there are so many ways that voice can communicate then you find that this pattern is getting repeated maybe 4, 5 times or you see this pattern when you get to know this person over a period of 5 days, 10 days, 15 days. Now you start saying that this kind of this person has this kind of a personality, so that is another thing that we would be able to identify.

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**Can we change our ways of speaking?**

- Yes, we can
- Check the Discussion Forum
- Check the PDFs that we share

*Voice and Speaking Skills for Dummies: Judy Apps*

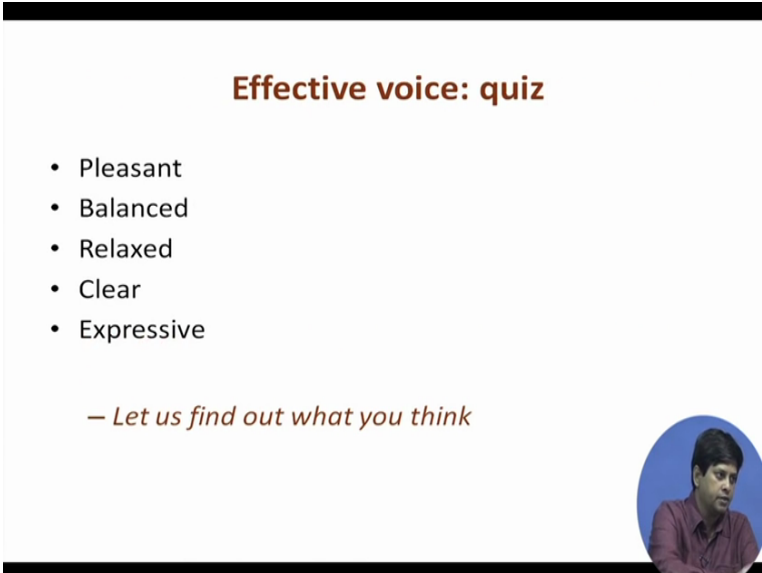
But as I told you I have just touched upon these and probably we are going to do it together. So, the point is that after doing that what next, can we change our ways of speaking? Yes, we can, it is very easy if you are speaking in a low voice then the first

thing to do is speak loudly that is not a big deal if, you are speaking slowly you can speak fast if you are speaking fast you can slow down. So, if you can do these 3 things probably we are making a significant amount of difference.

The other things might be more complicated, but these 3 points I have tried to make speaking loudly, speaking slowly or speaking fast can bring about a significant change in the way somebody understands about how you are speaking our perceives your way of speaking pauses or lack of pauses and fascism specific words. So, if you make a list of 5 or 10 such things probably we can transform the way we speak and we can improve it in a significant way.

So, here is a just a name of a book you can Google and you can find that you can find many places in on the web where you have a lot of tips given to you, but what I am trying to simply convince you of is the fact that it is pretty easy to change the way you speak if you make a habit of it and if you can identify the bad habit's you are formed and you can continually make a an effort to improve the way you speak. So, yes it is possible that is all I wanted to make over here.


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**Effective voice: quiz**

- Pleasant
- Balanced
- Relaxed
- Clear
- Expressive

*— Let us find out what you think*




So, Effective voice: now pleasant, balanced, relax, clear, expressive. Now, if this is just for you to think about it. So, If you agree well yes if you do not agree then we will have to work as a team together and find out what makes you a good communicator right in terms of your voice. So, as I told you in 1 or 2 of the quizzes that we have planning these

are some of the issues will take up and we will try to solve them together, but for the time being you have your mind set you have these responses to the queries that I have met here and we will do it together.

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**How we perceive voices**

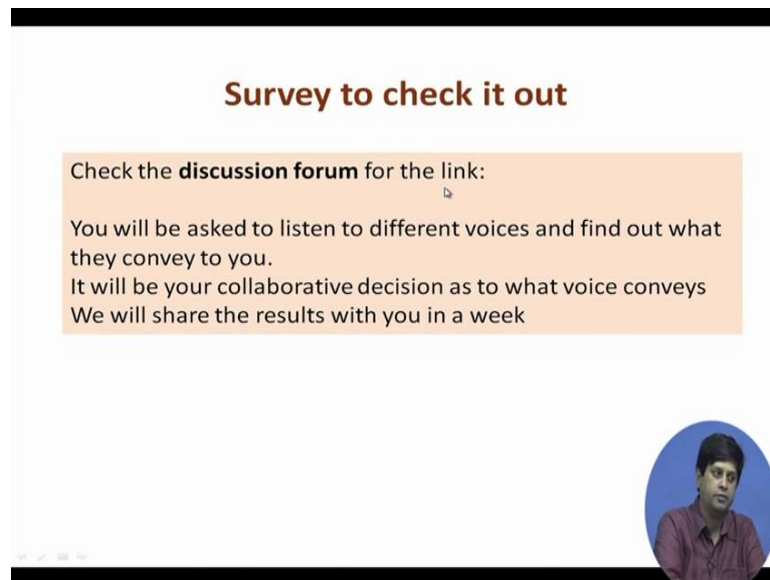
Simulated voice	speaker	General perception
Breathiness	Male	Young, more artistic
	Female	Feminine, pretty, petit, high strung, shallow
Tenseness	Male	Older, resistant, quarrelsome
	Female	Younger, more emotional, high-strung, less intelligent
Rotundity	Male	More energetic, healthy, interesting, enthusiastic
	Female	Increased liveliness, talkative, proud
Increased pitch variety	Male	More energetic, dynamic
	Female	More dynamic, feminine



So, how we perceive voices here are some examples again now from the western context now some of it might make sense as I told you with the voice data that will be sharing some of it we made exactly with and that is something which we will be able to find out as the in the following week once I have got the responses from you. So, people say that when you are simulating breathlessness it might sound young more artistic with a man, with women it might sign sound feminine, pretty, now but the point is that you see that you are not just talking about breathlessness. Breathlessness can be of various kinds it can be with a weak voice, it can be with a high pitched voice.

So, you see that depending on how it is used breathlessness it could be have a positive conversation, it could have a negative conversation now these contexts have to be combined, but even so let us say tenseness rotundity that is roundness increased pitch variety what they do these are some general assumptions. And again we will after we are completed the survey find out where we stand in the context of these assumptions that we very often make.


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**Survey to check it out**

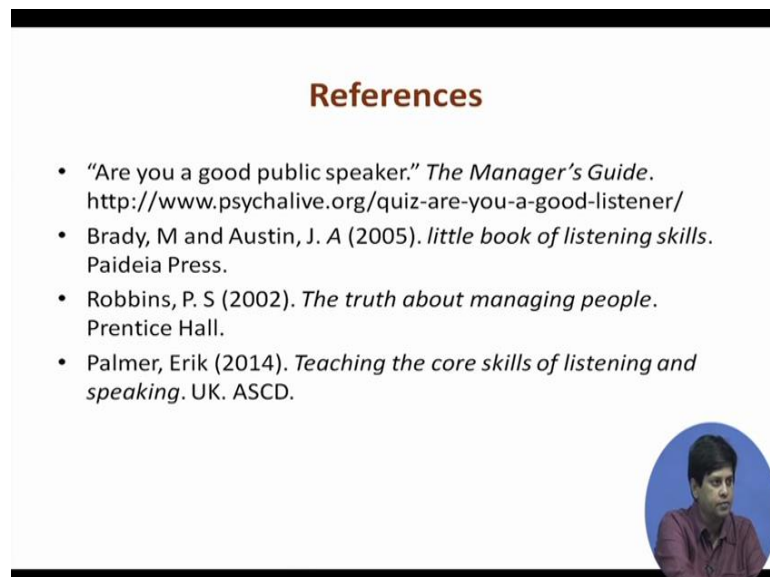
Check the **discussion forum** for the link:

You will be asked to listen to different voices and find out what they convey to you.  
It will be your collaborative decision as to what voice conveys  
We will share the results with you in a week




So, as I have already shared with you we are going to have either 1 or 2 surveys kindly, wait for that, and during those surveys we will be taking your responses and as a team we will be trying to answer the questions that I have tried to raise over here when we talk about speaking skills and the different dimensions of speaking skills.

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So, we stop here friends, these are some of my references and when we talk about conversation skills will elaborate on some of these points and we will proceed forward with some other interesting things.



Thank you.