Reinforcing the speaker: Effects of the speech, speaker, and listener.

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AB In a study of the reinforcement of speech by others, 61 college students listened to 2 positively and 2 negatively affective male and female speeches and indicated on paper each time they would maintain rapport and reinforce the speaker. Ss also completed the Eysenck Personality Inventory and the Multiple Affect Adjective Check List. Ss showed substantial stability in the frequency that they reinforced the speech of others. The affective content of the speech, the ethnicity of the listener, the sex of the listener, and the sex of the listenerxsex of the speaker interaction did not significantly influence rate of reinforcement. Psychometric measures of anxiety, hostility, depression, and neuroticism were rarely associated with frequency of reinforcement. However, extroversion was positively associated with frequency of reinforcement. It is concluded that the differential reinforcement of speech was an attribute of the listener rather than of what was heard, but that only a small part of the variance could be accounted for by attributes of the listener that have been examined in this and other studies.