



# International Journal of Research Publication and Reviews

Journal homepage: [www.ijrpr.com](http://www.ijrpr.com) ISSN 2582-7421

## Value of Famous Speeches in the field of Communication Skills-An Overview

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### ABSTRACT :

Public speaking is the process or act of performing a speech to a live audience. This process can include preparation, organization, and the delivery of a message that is clear and engaging. It can range from a formal speech at a conference to an informal talk at a social gathering.

Historical Perspective Public speaking dates back to ancient civilizations, notably the Greeks and Romans. In ancient Greece, public speaking was considered an essential skill for citizens. The great orator, Aristotle, even wrote a treatise on rhetoric. The Roman tradition also valued public oration, with figures like Cicero and Quintilian making significant contributions to the art of public speaking.

**KEYWORDS:-** Orator, Colonization, Communication, Exchange, Significance.

### INTRODUCTION :

Language is an important part of society to communicate our thoughts and ideas effectively to others. There are many languages across the globe. One of the popular and more widely used languages is English. English language has been spread across various countries by the British people during colonization. Significance of English language in the society was highlighted as “A human society needs language for communication between its members as well as for communication with other societies and to express and record its culture. Human societies are more extensively concerned with language as a mode of communication than as the expression of a culture. We can conceive of primitive societies which possess no literature, but cannot think of a society which doesn’t make use of language for its interpersonal communication. The individual needs language to carry out its functions. How effectively the society function depends, a good deal, on how efficiently it learns to use language for communication” (R.N. Ghosh, H.N.L. Sastry and B.K. Das, 1977). English language has become a global tool for communication. English is universally accepted as a global language and it is essential for all the countries to teach and learn English. If it is not possible, it would not be easy to cope with the speedy developments that are taking place in the world. English has become a global language because the number of the people who use English as a means of communication is higher than the number of the people who speak it as their mother tongue. In the case of English in India, the country has been experiencing the influence of the language for more than two centuries. Status of English in India has rightly been reiterated by, Vijay Baburao Pande (2013) as “English holds a place of status in our country, even after more than six decades since the British left India. No indigenous language, however, has come up to replace English, either as a medium of communication or as an official language in India under the influence of nationalistic feeling and emotional hostility English began to reassert its position”. Communication is an exciting and truly challenging field of human interaction. It is a process by which a person exchanges his ideas, opinions, views and information to another person through proper medium of exchange. The latest trends in engineering studies can be accessed only if the learners have a good comprehension skill in English as most of the theories of the latest science and engineering are written in English. English language skills of students who enter into the engineering stream vary significantly and it has become very crucial to assess their competence with prescribed syllabus. In addition to these inadequate language skills, majority of the students faces a lot problems inside (textbook terminologies) and outside the classroom. Hence, in order to facilitate language learning, as pointed by Long, “Just as no medical intervention would be prescribed before a thorough diagnosis of what ails the patient, so no language teaching program should be designed without thorough needs analysis”.

### WHAT IS A SPEECH?

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. According to Cambridge Advanced Learner’s Dictionary, “Speech is a formal talk given to a large number of people”. Speech is produced by precisely coordinated muscle actions in the speech organs. It occupies a prominent place in the history and popular culture of any country. Public speech serves as a role model to enhance one’s ability in effective communication.

### ***Public Speech***

“The Greek Philosopher Aristotle wrote one of the ancient world’s famous books on communication. In his Rhetoric, Aristotle argued that the truth has a basic advantage over error, and if truth fails to win out in public debate, it is because the defenders of the truth are inept, lacking in persuasive skill. He therefore urged the development of communication skills to assure that truth would always have able defenders. To avoid a horrible world such as the one George Orwell envisioned in 1984, where all our thinking is done for us, we would do well to remember Aristotle’s 2300-year-old advice. It is still valid”. (Bormann, Ernest G, and Nancy C. Borman.1977,p.15). “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. Some people fear that, it is better to welcome death than to give a speech. Public speaking seems to be a scary activity when they are about to deliver a speech. It is an art, which is learned by hard work and practice. It is not an easy skill to learn this art because it is very difficult to deliver a speech before public. One who drives away his/her fears, tensions, doubtful mind and shyness, this art of public speaking can be effectively exploited. It is easy to find a few good communicators but it is hard to find a few good public speakers. Many people in higher education believe public speaking is something that well educated people must be able to do well, but education is not a measurement of public speaking. Many orators came to limelight without graduation. For example, Abraham Lincoln did not receive formal education in his life except for 18 months. He was a student and at the same time he was a teacher for himself. He was mostly self-educated and was an avid reader. He became a lawyer because of his quest for learning. The confidence and clarity of the speech can be served as the measurement in public speech. Political leaders and famous personalities use public speech as a medium of communication. They can communicate with a large number of people in a short period of time. Framing a meaningful sentence is not a big task but framing an everlasting sentence is a big task. It is not important how many critical words are used in a speech, but how greatly the message is conveyed. The ideas, attitude, creativity and thinking of the speaker are very important in public speech in addition to his/her vocabulary. Speech is not to be considered as history, it can be used as a tool to enhance the future of users of English.

### ***Reasons for Low Performance in Listening***

Some of the reason for the low performance of the learners could be due to the following reasons. They are:

1. Based on their performance in these tests, it is clear that the learners found difficulty in understanding the pronunciation and pace of the speaker.
2. Such problems clearly affect the listening comprehension of the learners. They could have faced difficulty in comprehending the speech because of lack of exposure to listening to various varieties of English.
3. Learners need to develop the habit of watching English news and movies through which they can improve their listening ability.
4. Learners need to focus on all basic language skills equally in the classroom to attain good language proficiency and develop the learners’ communication skills.
5. The data clearly shows that students faced difficulty in understanding the speech of Barack Obama whereas they didn’t face difficulty in understanding the speech of Thomas Suarez, though he is a Native American speaker.
5. As a warm-up I Have a Dream by Martin Luther King Jr has been used to familiarize the learners with the testing process and in order to equip them with the skills using the public speech. The researcher has started the test with an AfroAmerican speaker (Barack Obama) speech followed by an Indianspeaker (Kiran Bedi). Later on, the Native American speaker (Thomas Suarez) was played to them and closed the test with Indo-American speaker (Renu Khator).
6. When students are tuned to the speeches, their comprehension levels are automatically increased. Learners might have felt that Thomas Suarez’s speech is related to them.
7. Some students are not able to comprehend the vocabulary of the speech and it affected the listening comprehension levels of the students.
8. 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.
9. There is a gradual improvement in the performance of the students in listening test.
10. 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.
12. Students faced difficulty in answering questions on inferential thinking and word accent rather than memory based questions.

### ***Reasons for Low Performance in Speaking***

1. Most of the students felt shy and they were hesitant to give audio-recordings.
2. It is difficult to find an English speaking environment in rural areas.
3. The regional medium students had difficulty in pronunciation, vocabulary and sentence structure.
4. Students should prioritize the language skills according to their requirements.
5. Learners fluency is found to be slow with repeated words and too many pauses in their speech.
6. The pauses could have occurred either because the learner wanted to speak only in the target language or the learner was probably thinking about the content. Some of the students failed to recollect the contextual vocabulary from the speech.

7. Students faced difficulty in understanding the speech of Barack Obama whereas they did not face difficulty in understanding the speech of Thomas Suarez, though he is a Native American speaker. (content of the speech i.e., technology, apps and the way it has been delivered; they could possibly associate themselves with the speaker being students of engineering and technology. Being the third speech, the respondents also could have turned themselves to listen to various speeches and answering the questions. Getting acclimatized to the test pattern could have been another possibility.)
8. The researcher has identified a few uneven words like Childs, peoples, vocabularies and children's from the recordings of the learners.

### **READING SKILLS :**

Reading means to understand the meaning of printed words, that is written symbols. It implies reading with comprehension. The reader understands what the writer intends to convey (A.L. Kohil,1988,p.177). There are two types of reading assessments: 1) Reading Comprehension 2) Reading Accuracy. The researcher has taken Reading Comprehension Assessment to test the comprehension skills of the students. The researcher gave questions on reading comprehension, match the following, re-arrange the jumbled sentences and cloze task under reading section. Students were asked to read a passage of text to answer the reading comprehension questions in addition to that learners also had a listening experience in this speech. The researcher has given reading comprehension passages, match the following and arrange in a sequence order type questions from the speech to test their reading skills. Most of the students are good at reading comprehension skills because this is a habitual practice for them. Learners were able to identify the correct answers effectively and they were found to be good at skimming and scanning the text. A few learners made mistakes in questions on match the following and jumbled sentences because they were not good at intensive and scanning reading skills.

### **WRITING SKILLS**

Most of the students had very few errors in grammar in writing. On the contrary, they made too many grammatical mistakes in speaking. Learners used the words like motivation, inspiration, role model, powerful, excellent, best, inspired, encouraged, reflected, admiring, heart-touching and effective. The data shows that some grammatical mistakes were found in the writing skills of the students. Some of the responses are as follows:

it can be inferred that learners made mistakes in grammatical aspects like subject-verb-agreement, articles, prepositions, capitalization and commas in punctuation. - Some of the students could not recollect the contextual vocabulary from the speech. - A few students found difficulty in organization of their ideas because they might have focused on grammatical structure than the organization.

### **Importance of Public Speeches in the Classroom**

Public Speeches are not given just like that, speakers could have spent many days to draft before delivering the speech. Speakers are very cautious about choice of words, content, organization and grammar. Public Speech can be considered as one of the resources, where a learner can find all language components (vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation-tone, delivery, tempo, presentation skills, and body language). All the language components can be taught to students by using public speeches. The researcher has designed some tasks and activities to perform in the classroom covering language components like phrasal verbs, sentence formation. This activity was given to the First year engineering students as part of the warm-up activity. Respondents were asked to take up extensive reading to identify verbs, prepositions and adverbs from given passage. Students were asked to combine verbs with prepositions and adverbs to make phrasal verbs

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## **BACKGROUND TO THE PRESENT STUDY**

The contemporary engineering aspirants know that in order to endure and succeed in India and in the world, they need "communication skills" or in other words communicative competence in English language. In the present scenario, students are competing for job positions with a global workforce; it would be their English language proficiency that would be tested to the maximum, as English is the most widely spoken language in the world at present. In the Indian context, an engineering student's success in the on-campus recruitment is mainly based on their demonstration of communication skills. According to the National Association of Software and Services Company (NASSCOM) former president Kiran 8 Karnik, only 25 percent of technical graduates are suitable for employment in the outsourcing industry because of their lack of abilities to speak or write well in English (Rayan, Albert P. 2008,p.1). The purpose of the study is to examine the communicative competence of first year students of engineering, whose mother tongue is Telugu or Urdu or Hindi in the field of listening and spoken discourse. Students can improve their vocabulary, pronunciation, intonation, grammar and body language through speeches. It is a difficult task to invent innovative methodologies and techniques for effective communication skills by taking public speech as a rich source for learning.

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## **CONCLUSION :**

The present paper has attempted to identify the listening and speaking skills of the students by taking public speeches as a source. Public speeches can be utilized as a teaching material and as a language learning source/tool to develop communication skills of the students. The researcher has selected five speeches to test the 141 students. A random sample of 40 students of first year B. Tech out of 90 from five different colleges of engineering affiliated to Jawaharlal Nehru Technical University Hyderabad (JNTUH) was taken for the present study. The researcher has taken up one receptive skill (Listening) and one productive skill (Speaking) to discuss more in detail. The questionnaire consists of five parts like general comprehension skills, listening, speaking, reading and writing. The researcher has started the listening test with native speaker (Barack Obama) speech followed by an Indian speaker (Kiran Bedi) after that again native speaker (Thomas Suarez) and closed with IndoAmerican speaker (Renu Khator). Students faced

difficulty in understanding the speech of Barack Obama but they did not face difficulty in understanding the speech of Thomas Suarez, when students are tuned to the speeches their comprehension levels got automatically better. There is a slight improvement in the performance of the students in listening and speaking tests. The findings show that the hypothesis has been confirmed with reference to improving listening and speaking skills of the subjects by taking public speeches as a rich source to teaching/instruction.

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