

**Better Spoken English**  
**Prof. Shreesh Chaudhary**  
**Department of Humanities and Social Sciences**  
**Indian Institute of Technology, Madras**

**Lecture No. #05**  
**Tempo of Speech**

Good morning.

Good morning sir.

Once again, Good morning.

Good morning sir.

Are you All right.

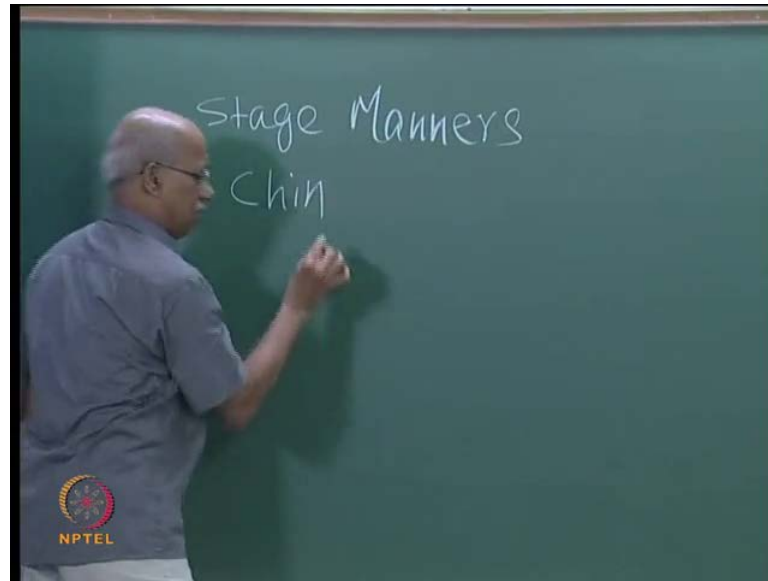
Yes sir.

Comfortable.

Yes sir.

You remember we have been talking about stage manners, please write, if you have not written already stage manners.

(Refer Slide Time: 00:36)



Stage manners for the for public speakers for professional presenters. I have not said rules, I have not said loss, I have not says acts, I have says manners; these are socially acceptable, socially accepted forms of behavior or norms of behavior you know, how you should understand, how you should eat; there is no rule which forces you to help an 80 year old a struggling with heavy bag, but there is a social norm, there is a social convention which says that, if you are 20 year old, and if before you there is a lady a struggling with heavy bag, you should offer to helpful.

How would you help her, you would say please, and then what would you say next, you can say please, and extend your hand or you can say please may I help you, what would you say? Please may I help these are social norms, there is no law which forces you to helpful. Similarly, these are norms socially accepted conventions, if you follow them, you are respected, you are understood, and you become an effective speaker.

I told you yesterday, that two or three things matter very much, how you dress, what is your body language. I also told you that, your listeners are more impressed by what they see than by what they hear. I also told you that, it is voice modulation that carries meaning. Do you remember, yes or no, do you remember.

Yes sir.

Right I will like to reinforce these two or three points once again, audience your listeners are much more impressed by what they see, than by what they hear. I will make an experiment to prove this point with your help, just continue to do, what I am doing and also do, what I tell you to do. Bring your fingers in a circle everybody bring your fingers in a circle and slowly gradually take it to your chin. How many people took it to their chin c h i n.

How many people took it to their chin c h raise your hands one, another person here somebody, two people I saw took it to their chin which is what I had said, but because I took it to my cheek because I took it to my cheek everyone here, did not follow, what I said, but you followed what I what you saw, you did not follow what you heard, you followed what you saw, this is the very powerful expression of the impact, visual impact that you have on your listeners. If you are not well dressed; if you are nervous; if you are not sure of yourself; your audience is not going to go with him, have no doubts about them, is not ok, do you do you understand, yes or no please

Yes sir.

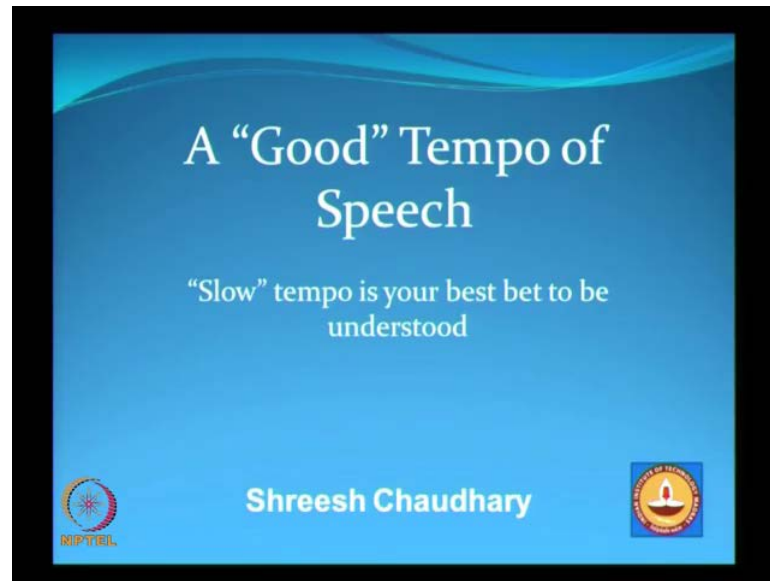
I get nervous, if I do not hear you, if I do not see your smiling and all. Similarly, voice modulation, slow tempo is extremely important. You may have only thirty seconds, you may speak only two sentences, make your two sentences such that all the important points are packed into those two sentences, but do not rush them do not rush fifty minutes talk into the thirty second slot. Human beings have something called intelligence and imagination, they are the only once who can decide, how to behave in a given context. Most animals do not have that facility. So, when you have limited time, it is all the more important, I like to repeat myself.

Are you with me?

Yes sir.

When you have limited time, it is all the more important that you speak slowly, pleasantly and clearly.

(Refer Slide Time: 06:19)



Now, the question arises, how slow is slow. I have said all the slide today, the leading slide today, my most, my first slide today, that slow is speech, a slow tempo is your best bet to be understood, how slow, there have been efforts at measuring, you know human speech can be measured, engineering that make is a wonderful science. Engineering has whole you one claim upon human intellect, that it can quantify any problem, any idea.

How distant is sun or the moon or the Jupiter, how much noise is there at adayar traffic signal or how much pollution is there inside our homes. Engineering can, engineering sciences can measure all these. We can also measure, how slow you should speak, but beyond these measurements, there is something called instinct, whereas you know such as when you eat, do you have a chart before you like Americans, 30 kilograms sorry not 30 kilograms, you know how do they measure nutrition.

sorry

Calories

Calories, 30 calories of this, 40 calories of that, should use a 30 calories of idlys and 10 10 calories of chutney. You know, you are instinct, your tongue tells you, how much of what you should take of course, there are people who eat more than they should. I am

sure you know them in the hostel right. You know, they eat like their every meal is the last meal. There are some people on the other hand, who do not want to eat at all.

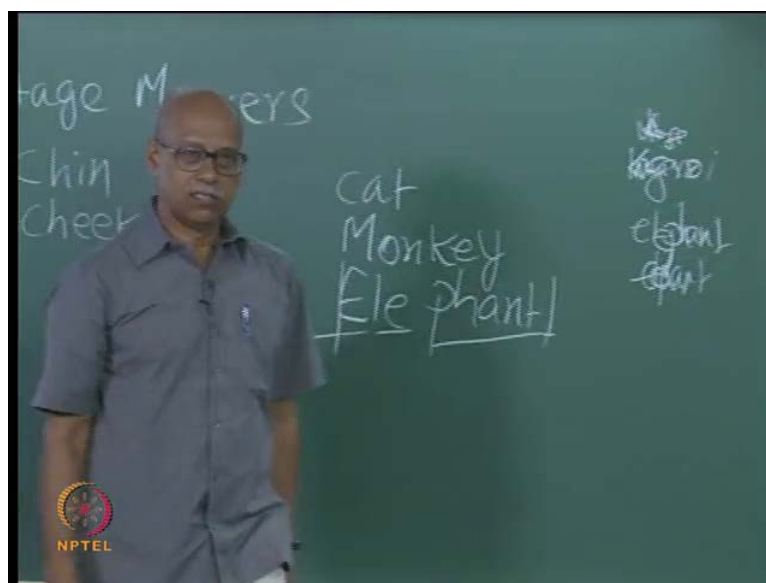
They are all stressed, the food is not good, the mood is not good, you know all kinds of problem, but in between the majority of us decent people like you and me. We know instinctively, how much we ought to eat; how much we ought to take any drink of water or juice or milk. Similarly, develop, this is important, please write that word, develop a feeling for the tempo.

I will also play you today, some examples of a comfortable speech at a comfortable tempo and I will ask you to decide, if you would like to speak that way. I am going to play you one or two recordings from my earlier classes. I have taught this course for nearly twenty five years and you know, some of your seniors made the effort, learnt how to you speak slowly. So, I have got some of the recordings here, I will play them to you, but let me give you a bit of theory as well after all, we are a students of science is an arts, is that ok, are you are you with me.

Yes sir.

Lovely, let us stay together, if you speak rapidly what happens, I I want to give me all your attention, I am talking some abstract theory is nothing concrete not example. So, if you talk rapidly then each unit of a speech gets limited time, the highest unit of a speech is syllable, what is the syllable.

(Refer Slide Time: 10:12)



I will give you, you know I give you an one example. It has how many syllables, only one, you can produce it in one breath once, your lung has to expand and contract only once, but look at the other another word, how many syllables does it have,

One, why, because your breath pulse, your your lung has to contract and expand twice. No matter, how clever you are, you may be j e e rank one. Your teachers like me, touch your feet, you are j e e rank one. Even them, you cannot speak it in one breath pulse, you will have to say mon key, how many syllables does this have, how many people said two, how many people said three, how many people say nothing, in the neutrality is the best I am not concerned. It has three, what are those E le phant.

So, you syllable is organized sorry speech is organized in syllables across languages, in all languages of the world, we in India call them akschar, have you heard of that word, when you learned Telugu or Tamil or Hindi you have called you akschara, when your literacy was started, it was known as akschararamba, your parents, your grandparents did pooja offered payasam to gods and to themselves.

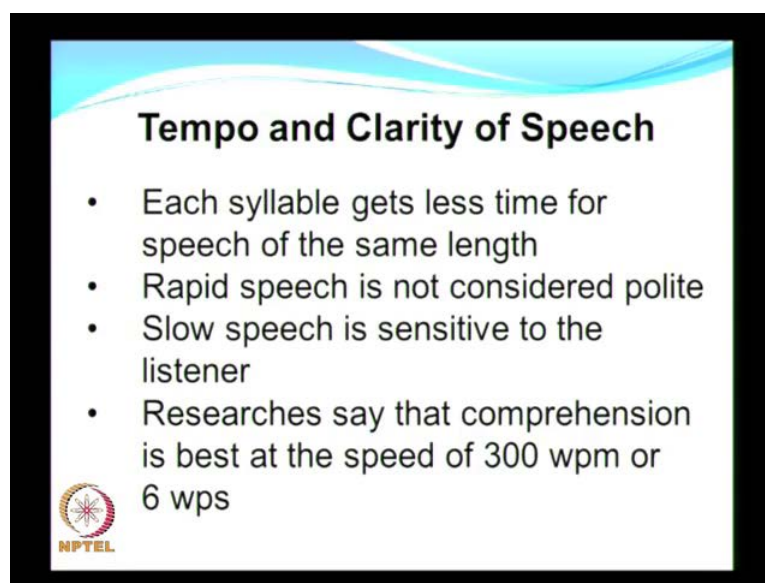
So, this is akschararamba akschara, all speech, in all languages of the world is organized in syllables. If you speak rapidly, what happens is, you know rather than get this space, you know it is contracted, if you speak more rapidly, it is further contracted, can you make out, what it is, if you speaks, what is this is, can you make it out easily. I will give you another word, can you make it out easily, what is this?

How many people feel sure? We have difficulty, even when you know it is that word, you are not too sure. Suppose, I wrote it this way, do you feel sure yes or no everybody please.

Yes sir.


Right this is the same thing it is speech you know, each unit of a speech has a time slot, if you speak rapidly, you take away it is time, you do not give it enough time then in the same space like an Indian railway general compartment meant for twelve people carrying seventy two people like, p t c bus in Chennai or in the morning 8 o'clock our institute bus meant for forty people carrying two hundred and thirty. Then it becomes difficult.

(Refer Slide Time: 13:45)



**Tempo and Clarity of Speech**

- Each syllable gets less time for speech of the same length
- Rapid speech is not considered polite
- Slow speech is sensitive to the listener
- Researches say that comprehension is best at the speed of 300 wpm or 6 wps

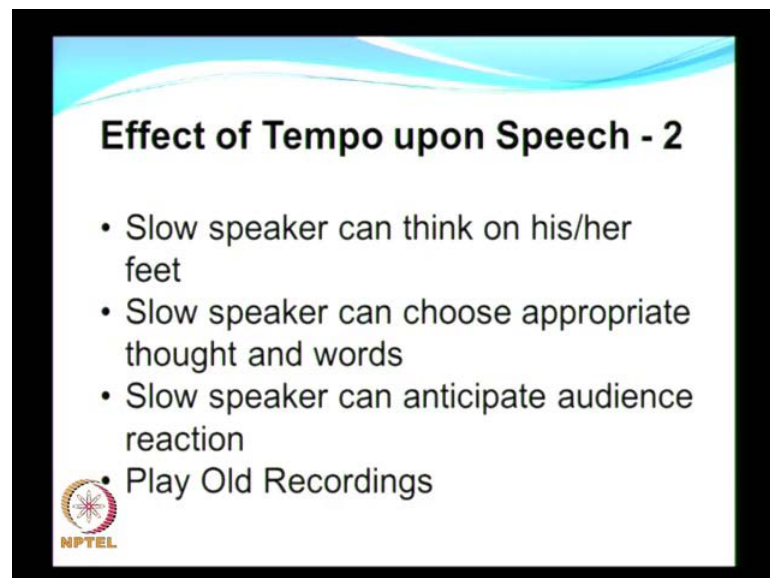
 NPTEL

Each syllable therefore, gets less time. Rapidly speech, second problem is rapidly speech is not considered polite. If you speak rapidly, it appears you want to discuss them, you come to my room, I am working on my computer and you ask me, what can I see you tomorrow morning, as I get lost right. Polite speech is slowly speech, carefully speech, clearly speech. Similarly, you know, there have been Researches, there are researchers, have you heard of a test called test of English as foreign language to feel, have you heard of another test of English called international English language testing system.

Many of these international test and we have at our own institute have done enough researches to see, I will I will be telling more about those researches a little later, we have also you know, tested intelligibility, how rapidly can you speak and yet be understood. And a general consensus once again, there are no hard and fast rules, that is not that, you must always walk to the left, you must pay taxes. A general consensus is, if you speak at the rate of about three hundred words per minute or roughly about 6 6 words per second, roughly it could be 5, it could be 7.


Similarly, if I say it could be three hundred five, three hundred four, two hundred ninety, you know do not comes somebody came to ask me, if you spoke at the rate of two hundred and ninety nine words per minute would he be understood, what would your answer yes. In human behavior, there are no hard and fast rule rules. Human beings can survive in Sahara, in Siberia, on snow, in desert and God has designed human beings with special effort, but ordinarily speaking, ideally speaking, this would be considered comfortable tempo of speech because, it would give you listeners as I said, enough time to comprehend, I will tell you more about it, a little later.

(Refer Slide Time: 16:25)



**Effect of Tempo upon Speech - 2**

- Slow speaker can think on his/her feet
- Slow speaker can choose appropriate thought and words
- Slow speaker can anticipate audience reaction
- Play Old Recordings

 NPTEL

Let me, there are other advantages, if you speak slow. You know, I am I am over emphasizing slow tempo, because you know, that is one thing we need to learn, somehow in India, we believe that rapidly speech is fluency speech; that is not correct. Fluency does not meant great tempo, fluency only means you ease with work, if you



want to describe the this color, you should know what color it is, what is the color of my shirt today.

What is the word for gray in Tamil, you do not know Tamil, you are not fluent in Tamil, it does not mean great speech, what is the word for gray in Hindi. I should give a course in Hindi vocabulary, Tamil vocabulary, Telugu, Malayalam please edit this portion out. I do not want my the world to think that my students are illiterate in their mother tongue. So, you see this is what you mean by fluency, if you do not know enough language in a particular, enough words in a particular language, you are not fluent in that language it has nothing to do with rapid speech. So, that is what, I am trying to emphasize, there are other advantages, a slowly speaker can think on his feet.

Sometimes you know, students would have taught for about forty years, sometimes students ask me difficult questions. Sir, what is the meaning of x, if I speak slowly I I I get time to think, control them and I control them, come on man, what a silly question you are asking, why do not you look up why do not you look up the dictionary and tell me tomorrow also ok do not forget. You know, I am not telling try to tell you to tell lies, if you do not know, you can say there is no harm in saying, I am sorry I do not know. Do you imagine that, anyone other than God knows everything, do you do you say yes or no?

No sir.

There is no harm in saying you know I do not know, but even when you want to say, I do not know say it slowly, politely you know with this smile on your lips, well may be you will try, you will take this help, you are involving your friends, your students, your listeners, your participants at the talk you are giving in the learning enterprise, there is no harm about that, but you can do that only, if you can think on your feet, no matter how much you plan in advance, each human situation is so dynamic that unforced seen things. Shall I repeat myself; unforced seen things keep happening. Therefore, if you speak slowly, you get time to think on your feet.

Slower speaker can also anticipate audience reaction, they know what kind of joke would go well whether to have a joke at this point or what to do, you know, I will play some

play old recordings now, you know and I like it to I like it to decide, I like it to open your note book, listen to it, make some notes, if you feel like, but I am going to ask you some questions based on the listening of this text.

Are you with me?

Yes sir.

Try and concentrate you know, earlier earlier batches when I taught it in class room not in this kind of wonderful studio, there were lot of ambient noise, yet your seniors concentrated hard well and answered questions. So, please try to listen.

My name is Vijay Ganesh Reddy; my roll number is 91 234; my branch is mechanical; my mother tongue is Telugu; age is 20; I selected this course because language is a powerful way of communication and to want to be successful need better communication skills and you can enjoy doing that. I have needed some new book shelf for a long time. So, during my holiday, I decided to tackle the job myself. Not that I am very clever with my hands, but it not seen too difficult and as I holi already said that, you could not afford to go away, I thought it would not to be prudent to spend money having it done professionally. I bought the wood at the local handicraft shop and and and at been left behind the previous owner of the house. This not good enough, I decided to buy a new one, that was my first mistake. My second one was to go to the biggest in London and asked for a saw. He would thing it was simple into to buy a saw, but it is not. I am Vijay.

What is the name of this boy? Please write, is it a boy or a girl?

Boy

Obviously, what is the name of this boy?

Vijay Ganesh Reddy

How many people feel sure, raise your hands. What is his roll number?

9 1 2 3 4

Have you written it down, what branch of?

Mechanical

What language does he speak at home?

Telugu

How old is he.

Twenty

What is he talking about?

What is he talking about?

What is he talking about?

Make a guess, are you afraid of the making mistakes, do not make mistakes that cost life, but class room is the only place remember, I hope some of you become teachers and you carry on this tradition. Class room is the only place, where you can make mistakes and yet prospered, yet learned outside would the class room in the world, it is not so easy. So, if you have some answer, try and test what he is talking about, what is Vijay Ganesh will be talking about?

Making of book shelf, making of book shelf.

Making of book shelf.

Anything else, what gives you that , what kind of book shelf, Is he a carpenter?

Generally speaking you would say, you have at some difficulty comprehending all that has been said right. Let us go to the next, let us go to the next part.

I am Vijay Ganesh Reddy. My roll number is m e 9 1 2 3 4 .

Did you say that correctly, last time I asked you roll number, how many people got roll number right, some people did and some people did not.

I am studying mechanical engineering. My mother tongue is Telugu. I am twenty. The medium of English is more important than the medium of writing. The medium of speech is more important than the medium of writing. English is spoken as mother tongue by most people in Australia, Canada, etcetera and most importantly better spoken English, source as an excellent opportunity to success in the competitive world.

Passage, I said to the man behind the counter, I want a saw, he was a nice man and did it is best for me. Yes sir, but we have fifteen different kinds for different jobs. What did you want it for, I explained about my book shelf and shelf like an ignorant in a that which was true. He saw that, I was a narvest and was very kind. He told me what I should need and that me to have a ladies size, easier to manage for the beginners. She was not been nasty just helpful and I was grateful to him. He also sold me a book and wood work for school boys and I have been reading yet with great interest. The next time in the shelves.

Are the two extracts spoken by the same person or different persons?

Same person

How many people feel it is the same person? How many people feel it is different people? Whom which of the two extracts do you understand better, the first or the second.

Second

Let me ask you some question, what is this boy talking about in the second extract.

Only one subject or more than one

More than one, what is he talk, what does it began with?

English importance of spoken English then what does he talks about after that.

Buying a saw, how many kinds of saw?

Were there in the big shop even to...

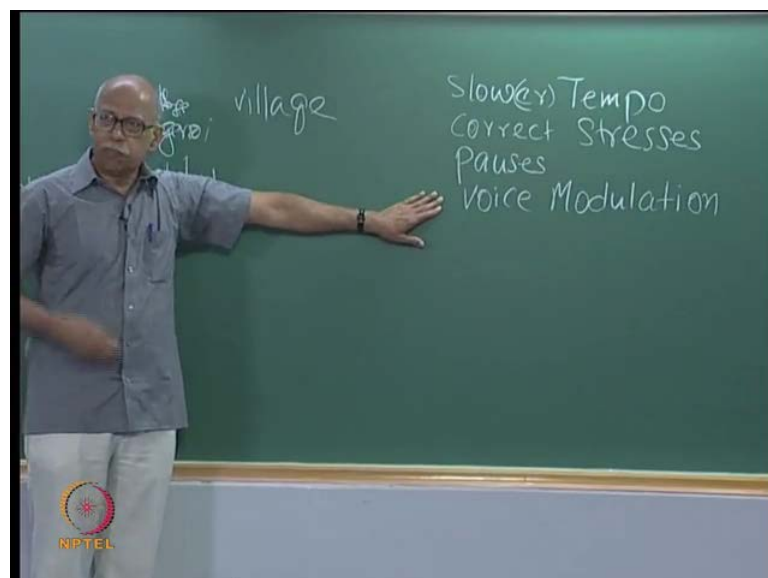
Fifteen

It is obviously, the second extract is obviously, easier to understand, is clearer, is that right, everybody do you agree.

Why now, that is of the question, number one is, what do you mean a slower, the same amount of his speech, but longer duration correct, anything else, what do you mean my pronunciation.

So, correct word stresses, any any other thing pauses very important, I play it again and I will ask you to notice the absence of pause in one and the presence of pause in the other.

(Refer Slide Time: 28:08)



Let me write here, these things make it different you know, Slower Tempo or let us say slow tempo sorry I am sorry slower tempo, correct Stresses then pauses where where did you notice pauses, at the end of the sentence, are also within the sentence within the sentence. Just listen to it once again, both of them and see if these things differ, shall we do that, sure. Please pay attention, ignore meaning for some time and look for these three things as I play them. I am sure you know, we can all do better than Ganesh.

My roll number is 91 234. My branch is mechanical. My mother tongue is Telugu. Age is twenty. I selected this course, because language is a powerful way of communication and if you want to be successful need better communication skills and you can enjoy doing that. I have needed some new book shelves for a long time. So, during my holiday, I decided to tackle the job myself. Not that I am very clever with my hands, but it did not seem too difficult and as I already said that, you could not afford to go away, I thought it would be prudent not to spend money having it done professionally. I bought the wood at the local handicraft shop and and and had been left behind the previous owner of the house. This was not good enough, I decided to buy a new one, that was my first mistake. My second one was to go to the biggest in London and asked for a saw. You would think, it was simple would you buy a saw, but it is not need. I am Vijay Ganesh Reddy. My roll number is m e 9...

How many parts are there to this voice name, how many parts, three, what are his names?

Vijay Ganesh Reddy. What is your full name Arun?

Arun Kumar Reddy.

How would you say it? Would you say I am Arun Kumar Reddy or how would you say it?

I am Arun Kumar Reddy. My name is Shreesh Chandran Choudhary. You know, your listeners may be listening to your name for the first time, give them time and because there are three words in your name. So, you need at least two pauses. So, for the numbers, look at the numbers.

9 1 2 3 4 . I am studying mechanical Engineering

What is your roll number Kiran?

Each letter or each digit must come out clearly. What is my phone number? 9 4 4 4 0 2 8 4 3 4, it is easy for you to note down and remember. Compare with, if I said my number is 9444028434 train got lost. Each unit has to have its time, mark the time.

My mother tongue is Telugu. I am twenty. The medium of English is more important than the medium of writing.

What is the complete sentence here, the medium of English actually he wants to say the medium of speech. Vijay Ganesh is still makes mistakes, note that he is a perfect speaker, but see the effort and see the result, what is the effort, to try to speak slowly with pauses and what is the result, greater understanding, greater clarity. Look at the next sentence and mark the pauses there, are you bored, are you with me, is it tiring?

lovely do not say no because I want to hear

The medium of speech is more important than the medium of writing.

How many pauses are here, what are the pauses?

Medium of speech

The medium of the speech

More important

It is easy for you to understand, like a good dinner which your mother gives you and bad dinner which you get in hostel everything together eat sambar, thayir, curd annam everything together like Buddhists, put in one bowl as gulla and pickle together and eat them, but a good dinner is one, where it is served one, after the one, let us first have soup

and how is soup, is soup eaten or drunk. How many people say eaten, how many people say drunk, others do you know the meaning of the word soup, soup is eaten is not drunk. There are two ways of eating, one is take the bowl and the other is take it slowly, for this is slowly, relish it, that it is your appetite then you get starter, then you get main course. So, look at the pauses.

English is spoken as mother tongue by most people in Australia, Canada, Newzealand etcetera and most imp...

When you make a list, list of anything, list of hostels, the hostels that require repair or Alagnanda,Mandakini and Tapti. Suppose, I say hostels are required Alagnanda,Mandakini and Tapti get lost you know, every each unit requires time.

Importantly, better spoken English serves as an excellent opportunity to taste success in the competitive world. Passage, I said to the man...

I want you to note now, the voice modulation in the voice of this boy, is that ok. Do you understand me, what do you mean by voice modulation. Sometimes it is high; sometimes it is low, you know the conversation, the meaning is brought into voice. Let me write the word, the third things I said, I have written three things already, the forth thing is, please write it is not that, you must always speak at the same speed, that is what you called mono toners. Mono means one, single and tone means tones, do not make it monotonous, make it multi toners or poly toners. Bring modulation in your voice, listen to this boy once again, now for modulation.

Behind the counter, I want a saw, he was a nice man and did it is best for me. Yes sir, but we have fifteen different kinds for different...

How did the sales man answer him, no repeat those words, how did the sales man answer him.

Yes sir

It is yes sir, what did the sales man answer him?

Yes sir

And then next.



But we have fifteen different kinds, what did you say?

Once again

You see the modulation, mark the modulation in voice.

Different jobs. What did you want it for, I explained about my book shelves and shelf like an ignorant fool in a word of experts which was true. He saw that, I was a novice and was very kind. He told me, what I should need and at advised me to have a ladies size, easier to manage for the beginners.

What kind of saw was he advised to buy?

Ladies size

This saw that was a ladies size, was the sales man being sarcastic.

Selling ladies size saw to the boy, was he being sarcastic

No

No, why did he suggest that.

Give the answer.

Easier for the beginner

Easier for the beginners, what did you say?

Let us, go further

What I should need and at advised me to have a ladies size, easier to manage for the beginners. He was not been nasty, just helpful and I was grateful to him. He also sold me a book and wood work for school boys and I have been reading yet with great interest. The next time, in the shelves.

These things can be learnt you know, my experience at this institute has been at, this is the twenty sixth time I am teaching this course in as many semesters and I have always felt that, if you make answer, unfortunately, you have to make that.

Some people, sometimes say, Vijay Ganesh was a very hard working boy, I can see him sitting here, he was just another boy like you. This is the way of learning which would work with anyone, do you think only some people can learn, do you think only one or two gifted people can speak in that we that manner or can change their accent on their speech or do you think, it is possible for all of us to learn and change our accent in it is speech. What do you, what is your feeling?

It is like learning another language, once you learn another way of a speaking, keep it with you and use it when necessary, just as you know three or four or five languages, you know Telugu, you know Hindi, you know Tamil, you know English, you know French and you use them, when you feel like using well, when there is a relevant and appropriate opportunity to use well. Similarly, this is learning another way of speaking.

If you want to learn it then for some time for the next eight to ten weeks, even in hostel, try and learn in this way, try and speak this way, even in Telugu speak slowly, even in Malayalam speak slowly with pauses. If you speak longer that three or four minutes, wipe your lips like, I do take a pauses at the meaningful places at the right place, do not jump of the train because before it has reached the railway station, but when there is a stop, take it pause.

You will see that your accent to changing. People pay attention to you when you speak, you are you become an effective speaker. The problem is you have to do this, no matter how much I love you, I cannot give you a tablet and tell you take it before breakfast and take it after dinner in the night and tomorrow morning when you wake up, you will be speaking like x or y. It is the skill, it is like learning to ride a bicycle, can I learn riding the bicycle for you, yes or no, no matter how much I love you, no matter, how much your mother loves you. She cannot learn for you, you have to learn, just as you have learnt, how to walk, anyone can learn it, a boy or a girl. I am going to play the recording from, the girl. Now, just see

My name is Akila. My roll number is ch 07 b0 04. My phone number is ...

What is her roll number?

What is her roll number?

ch 07 b0 04

It is so easy to remember. She has spoke to you at least twenty four months ago. She was here, two years. What is this, c h 0 7 means three years ago, four years ago. She might a graduated now, right. She is giving her phone number, please do not call, these things are suppose to be private, kindly ignore it, but see, can it, it can be delivered with clarity.

9 7 9 1 0 7 9 7 4 1. My account number is 3 5 7 340

See, numbers always go better in groups, do not say 340 and then say 19, better say 3 4 0 and 1 9 or if you follow them, if you follow the grouping of numbers then follow it entirely, the point is be consistent, either say 1 2 2 4, I would say fourteen, twenty four, better say, better pronounce them individually, 1 4 2 4 go in groups and you will find, you are better understood, you are seldom or rarely misunderstood of course, you will may still be misunderstood because speech is a two way traffic, if your listener does not pay attention then you do not get fight, but see

My hostel is sharavathi.

I am going to play some text and please pay attention to the voice for all the 3 or 4 things I said there. Slow tempo, correct stresses, pauses and voice modulation does this young lady have them in her speech.

I believe that India needs more civil engineers than computer engineers because a large number of high ways, roads, dams and buildings been built to the basic engineering heuristic that need to be followed. The solution to this problem comes from having a very good set of civil engineers working towards buildings, dams and projects.

What is she talking about, what is one person, anyone please, what is she talking about? Abarna, Aswini, what is she talking about?

Irfan, where are you? Are you sleeping? No, someone your friend was sleeping, go to sleep, does not matter, please found, what is the girl talking about?

Important of civil engineering.

Importance of civil engineering importance of civil engineering, what is she talking about?

Importance of civil engineering

Importance of civil engineering, the question was whether x is more important or y, listen to her answer, you know rather she is more proud of her branch than possibly good, but let us see do you notice the pauses, can you repeat the sentence a large number of I I I will rewind, listen for the pause please can you repeat the last two sentences therefore,

once again therefore,

Therefore

Next

What happened?

So, there are clear natural pause do. Therefore, what happens is. It comes to you naturally, it is the matter of common sense, all you have to do is to be sensitive to it pay attention and you will find that

So, briefly the point there are trying to make is the following the point there are try to make is the following, that all of us all of us can in all of us should is speak at the comfortable tempo. What is the comfortable tempo? You can quantify it, you can say 5 words, 6 words, 7 words per second. There is another way speak with correct stresses take pauses with natural word groups, and bring meaning through your voice, do not let it be flat monotone. Thank you, have a good day.