

## EXPLORING ELEVATOR SPEECH TECHNIQUES IN SELECT INDIAN REGIONAL FILMS

Manjusha C.B.\* and V. Vijayalakshmi\*\*

---

**Abstract:** The world around is moving in a faster pace and it is becoming very competitive and mechanical in every sphere of life. Technology is developing day by day and it has paved way for an easy life style. From domestic chores to college projects, everything is simplified using latest technology. In such a scenario, people do not have time to lend their ears to anyone which would distract them from the busiest life schedules. Any news or information has to be informed crisply so as to gain attention. Films also fit in this and people are not ready spare continuous three hours for watching a movie that do not have a particular liner or dialogues which overlay the story of the entire movie. These liners or statements of dialogues are nothing but the techniques of elevator pitch or speech included in films to attract the audience.

This paper thrives to bring out the techniques of elevator speech used Indian cinema in select films to attract the audience.

**Keywords:** Elevator speech, Indian cinema, usage of words, techniques of elevator pitch.

### INTRODUCTION

Techniques of elevator speech employed in movies usually will be a single dialogue delivered by anyone of the actors. This statement or dialogue liner will bring drastic twist in the movie. These techniques will make the audience to sit back and watch the rest part of the movie without feeling bored though it was boring before. There are many Indian regional language films which have received standing ovation just for a few phrases put together as a statement. One thing to be noted is when such single liners or a dialogue of 90 seconds have the power to grab the attention of myriads of audience, if used in employment interviews will not it seize the interest of the employer? This paper aims to cynosure techniques of elevator speech used in select film. Through this paper, the personality changes of the central characters in the chosen movies after the usage of elevator speech is also explored. Movies selected are Malayalam movie *How old are you* and *English Vinglish* from Tamil movie industry. Reasons for choosing these movies are, down in south though the movies of other languages are enjoyed by the audience, Malayalam and Tamil are the languages that occupy credentials. Moreover, films of these language genres are appreciated and welcomed by the audience down south.

### HISTORY OF ELEVATOR SPEECH

From *An excerpt from The NEW Elevator Pitch by Chris Westfall*, The original “elevator pitch” comes from the studio days of Hollywood, when a screenwriter

---

\* Research scholar, Doctoral Degree, SSL, VIT University, Chennai. Email: manjushacb@gmail.com

\*\* Assistant Professor, SSL, VIT University, Chennai

would (supposedly) catch an unsuspecting executive on an elevator ride. There, with his prey trapped within the confines of the elevator, the screenwriter would 'pitch' an idea to the decision-maker, in 30, 60, or even 118 seconds.

### **ELEVATOR PITCH IN MOVIE INDUSTRY**

From Lights Media Collective, it could be understood that "The two-minute elevator pitch is an integral part of Hollywood folklore, and it goes like this: when you have a movie you need to get made, you must have a two minute pitch ready and you must be prepared to deliver it at the drop of a hat. Because, living in Hollywood, one day you might just find yourself in an elevator with an executive or a studio head who – because he's in an elevator with you and can't get out until it reaches his floor – is essentially trapped with you. Trapped in the elevator with you, the studio head will have no choice but to hear your pitch, love it, shake your hand, and make you the next big Hollywood filmmaker before you've even reached your intended floor" (2016).

### **DEFINITION**

A few of the definitions of elevator speech are

A quote by Seth Godin founder and CEO of Yoyodyne goes as thus "The purpose of an elevator pitch is to describe a situation or solution so compelling that the person you're with wants to hear more even after your elevator ride is over". (Seth).

Business dictionary defines elevator speech as "Very concise presentation of an idea covering all of its aspects, and delivered within a few seconds (the approximate duration of an elevator ride)."

Investopedia defines elevator pitch as "A slang term used to describe a brief speech that outlines an idea for a product, service or project. The name comes from the notion that the speech should be delivered in the short time period of an elevator ride, usually 20-60 seconds."

"An elevator pitch is a brief, prepared statement that defines a product, service or outlines the value of an organization or individual in as little as 15 seconds, the length of time of a typical elevator ride." (Whatls, 2012). Furthermore, it is added that typically, an elevator pitch begins with an introduction, quickly moves on to a short summary of the subject and concludes with a question or provocative statement intended to make the listener think about the pitch later on. An effective elevator pitch contains clear language that the audience understands and uses layman's terms rather than hard-to-follow technical terms. The pitch is personalized for the intended audience and can be tailored to suit the interests of varied listeners (2012).

To market oneself in an employment interview, appropriate vocabulary is in demand. In a short span of time, the candidate must be able to tell even the minute

details of all the achievements without creating any boredom. For this, the techniques of elevator speech are of great help. 'Platinum 90' or the first ninety seconds of meeting the interviewer is always the prime time to impress the employer. If this 90 second is used aptly, it will add to the successful moment.

For a better elevated speech, enhanced speaking skill and choice of vocabulary is in demand. From a course work designed by Sridhar and Sahana of IIT Bombay on *Creating your Elevator Speech*, it could be understood that a well crafted elevator speech should be Precise; Problem must be emphasized, should have proper examples and should be free from vague points (2014, 2015). A well refined speaking skill encompassing good vocabulary, wise usage of words and the need of time management is required. There are ample of researches done to prove that art of speaking is intertwined sociological and psychological state of a person apart from their cultural background.

### **QUALITIES OF GOOD ELEVATOR SPEECH**

According to IIT Bombay (2014-16), a good elevator speech is crafted keeping in mind the following qualities:

- Precise, specific
- Emphasize the problem to be addressed
- Give a context
- Unique
- Core problem to be introduced
- Tailor the pitch – tone, examples
- Use appropriate aids- words

### **ELEVATOR SPEECH TECHNIQUES USED IN SELECT MOVIES**

Movies of Indian regional languages selected for this paper are Malayalam movie *How old are you* and *English Vinglish* from Tamil movie industry.

Elevator speech used in the movie *How Old Are You* (17 May 2014) is the one most vital single liners 'Who decides the expiry date of a woman's dream' and 'So, how old are you?'. These two single liners have brought in a radical change in the character of protagonist Nirupama Rajeev an UD clerk of Revenue Department. When analysed in depth, it was understood Nirupama's life before wedding was very successful and she had plethora of opportunities to exhibit her talents. After wedding, her life like almost all typical Indian women had a change and she was bonded within her family. Her life moved on within the circle of family and job. Family life and personal life of Nirupama Rajeev went of smoothly and did not spawn for any break of retrospection though she craved for a change. But, her question to her daughter 'Who decides the expiry date of a woman's dream? Made

her a laughing stock in facebook. This question was posted by her daughter to the Indian President which triggered his interest in meeting her. Nirupama fainted on meeting the Indian President and became an object of ridicule. Later, her life after her friend Susan David reminded her of the woman she used to be and inspires her to rediscover her younger self.

‘Who decides the expiry date of a woman’s dream?, is the single liner used in this movie which has brought an intellectual twist in the movie eradicating boredom. It is to be noted that this statement fits in the qualities of a good elevator speech as crafted by IIT Bombay. It is this elevated speech that has brought an overall change in the character of Nirupama Rajeev paving way for resilience. Through this, she got the courage to face the world in a positive perspective. She had the power to answer age does not matters for a woman to achieve dreams. Nirupama stood as an answer for the statement dreams are our signature.

*English Vinglish* (5 October 2012) is another movie chosen for the paper. Protagonist Shashi is an illiterate and is mocked by her husband and children always for her poor English language. She runs a home-business of selling ladoos. She is offended always and is ridiculed always. This brings in a yearning for her master over English language. ‘Shashi is born for making ladoos’ is the single liner that fits in the qualities of elevator speech. It is this statement of her husband makes her to learn English when she gets an opportunity to visit United States. She toiled hard to learn the language and brought in laurels for herself by giving a touching and enlightening toast to the married couple in English, surprising everyone who knew her as a typical, conservative, Indian housewife. It is to be understood that one line of mocking statement has changed a timid person to a woman of success.

## CONCLUSION

Elevator speech is a phrase, line or statement that has the power to magnetize the listeners. From the selected movies, elevator speech has attracted the characters in a very positive way through which their life has changed totally. From the analysis made, it could be understood that the chosen single liners have the above stated qualities of elevator speech. A few phrases or the words put together as a liner elevates the personality of a person like Nirupama and Shashi. Impacts of elevator speech in the protagonists are to be appreciated as it has redefined not only the situation but also the individual qualities on the whole. Overall personality of the protagonists has tuned up in a stunning way in spite of the elevator speeches being used in a sense of mockery. At times, certain words will have the power to bring a positive change in life of people and so powerful is the set of elevated words. Thus, if elevator speech techniques are employed in routine life it will definitely bring a magical change to the scenario.

### *References*

- English Vinglish*. Dir. Gauri. Perf. Sri Devi. Hope Productions, 2012. Web.
- Guinan, Jack. *The (I) Investopedia Guide to Wall Speak: The Terms You Need to Know to Talk like Cramer, Think like Soros, and Buy like Buffett*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 2009. Print
- How Old Are You*. Dir. Roshan Andrews. Perf. Manju Warriar. Magic Frames, 2014. Web.
- The Business Man's Encyclopedia: A Hip-pocket Business Counsellor*. Chicago: System, 1905. Print.
- Definition of Elevator Speech*. Retrieved from [whatis.techtarget.com](http://whatis.techtarget.com)
- Definition of Elevator Speech*. Retrieved from [www.businessdictionary.com](http://www.businessdictionary.com)
- Definition of Elevator Speech*. Retrieved from [www.investopedia.com/terms/e/elevatorpitch.asp](http://www.investopedia.com/terms/e/elevatorpitch.asp)
- Sridhar Iyer, Sahana, (2016). *Creating Your Elevator Pitch*. IIT Bombay. Course Work. October 2015, March 2016.
- Elevator speech in movies*. Retrieved from [www.lightsfilmschool.com/blog/what-is-the-two-minute-elevator-pitch/1528](http://www.lightsfilmschool.com/blog/what-is-the-two-minute-elevator-pitch/1528). (2016).

