

## **THE HISTORY AND STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT OF ORATORY**

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### **Abstract**

This article analyzes the history and stages of development of oratory as a significant cultural, social and educational phenomenon. Oratory is not merely the ability to speak beautifully in front of an audience; it is a complex communicative skill that includes logical thinking, linguistic accuracy, emotional influence, ethical responsibility and audience awareness. The article examines the formation of oratory from ancient oral traditions to classical Greek and Roman rhetoric, medieval religious eloquence, Renaissance humanistic speech, Enlightenment public debate and modern digital communication. The research is based on historical-comparative and theoretical-analytical methods. Special attention is paid to the concept, content, structural elements, formation factors, practical application, current problems and development perspectives of oratory. The findings show that oratory developed in close connection with social needs, political systems, educational traditions, religious institutions and technological changes. In modern education, oratory plays an important role in developing students' communicative competence, critical thinking, confidence and professional readiness. The article argues that effective oratory should be based on the unity of content, logic, language culture, ethical responsibility and practical training.

**Keywords:** oratory, rhetoric, public speaking, eloquence, speech culture, communication, persuasion, audience, critical thinking, communicative competence.

### **Introduction**

Oratory is one of the oldest and most influential forms of human communication. Since ancient times, people have used speech to persuade, teach, lead, defend, inspire and organize social life. Before the development of writing, oral speech was the main means of preserving traditions, transmitting knowledge, explaining rules and influencing collective decisions. For this reason, the history of oratory is closely related to the history of human society itself.

The term "oratory" usually refers to the art of speaking effectively before an audience. However, this definition is not complete if oratory is understood only as beautiful pronunciation or emotional expression. Real oratory requires meaningful thought, logical structure, accurate language, convincing argument, appropriate tone,

psychological preparation and ethical responsibility. A speaker may have a strong voice and expressive gestures, but if the speech lacks clear ideas and reliable arguments, it cannot be considered effective oratory.

The relevance of this topic is connected with the growing importance of communication in modern society. Today, public speaking is necessary in education, science, politics, law, business, medicine, media and international relations. A teacher explains knowledge through speech; a lawyer defends a position through argument; a doctor communicates with patients through clear explanation; a student presents research through academic speech; a leader motivates a team through persuasive communication. In each case, oratory is not decorative but functional.

The development of digital technologies has also changed the nature of public speaking. Modern oratory is no longer limited to physical halls, classrooms or official meetings. It appears in online conferences, video lectures, podcasts, social media speeches and digital presentations. This situation increases the demand for speakers who can express ideas clearly, responsibly and convincingly in both offline and online environments.

The purpose of this article is to analyze the historical development of oratory and identify its main stages, structural components, formation factors, practical significance and current problems. The article also discusses ways of developing oratory skills among students, especially in the context of language education and professional training.

### **Methods**

The article is based on a theoretical and historical analysis of scientific, pedagogical and linguistic sources related to oratory, rhetoric and speech culture. The methodological basis of the research includes historical-comparative, descriptive-analytical and generalization methods. These methods make it possible to examine oratory as a phenomenon that developed through different historical periods and social conditions.

The historical-comparative method was used to compare the role of oratory in ancient, medieval, Renaissance, Enlightenment and modern periods. This approach helps to show that each period gave oratory a specific function. In ancient society, speech served community leadership and social order. In classical Greece and Rome, it became a political, legal and educational discipline. In the Middle Ages, it was closely connected with religious and moral instruction. In the Renaissance and Enlightenment periods, it became a tool of humanistic education, public debate and social reform. In the modern period, it has become a universal communicative competence required in almost every professional field.

The descriptive-analytical method was used to explain the concept, content and structural elements of oratory. The research analyzes such elements as content, logic, argumentation, language norms, voice, intonation, body language, audience awareness and ethical responsibility. The generalization method was used to summarize theoretical views and practical recommendations for developing oratory skills in educational settings.

The research is conceptual in nature. It does not present experimental data, but it synthesizes existing theoretical and historical knowledge in order to clarify the pedagogical value of oratory. This type of methodology is appropriate for a conference article focused on the historical development and educational significance of a cultural-communicative phenomenon.

### **Results**

The analysis shows that oratory developed through several major historical stages. The earliest stage may be called the oral-traditional stage. In this period, speech functioned as the main means of communication, memory and social regulation. Tribal leaders, elders, priests and wise people used speech to explain customs, resolve conflicts, motivate warriors and preserve collective identity. Although there was no systematic theory of rhetoric at that time, the social power of speech was already clear. A person who could speak wisely and persuasively gained respect and influence.

The next important stage was connected with ancient Eastern civilizations. In Egypt, Mesopotamia, India, China and Central Asia, eloquence was associated with wisdom, justice, moral instruction and state governance. Speech was not only a technique of persuasion but also a sign of ethical and intellectual maturity. In Eastern traditions, the speaker was expected to be responsible, respectful and morally balanced. This view is also visible in Uzbek cultural heritage, where meaningful, polite and appropriate speech has always been valued.

The classical stage of oratory reached a high level in ancient Greece. In Greek city-states, especially Athens, public speaking became a necessary skill for political and legal participation. Citizens spoke in assemblies, courts and public debates. This social environment created the need for rhetorical education. The Sophists taught persuasion and argumentation, while philosophers such as Aristotle gave rhetoric a theoretical foundation. Aristotle explained persuasion through three main means: ethos, pathos and logos. Ethos refers to the credibility and moral character of the speaker, pathos refers to emotional influence, and logos refers to logical argumentation. This model remains relevant today because any effective speech requires trust, emotional connection and rational proof.

The Roman stage developed oratory in the fields of law, politics and public administration. Cicero considered oratory a civic art that required knowledge, style, morality and practical wisdom. Quintilian also emphasized that an orator should be a morally good person skilled in speaking. This idea is important because it connects speech with ethics. A strong speaker should not manipulate the audience or use language irresponsibly. Speech has social consequences, so the speaker must understand the moral weight of words.

During the Middle Ages, oratory became closely connected with religion and moral education. Sermons, theological discussions, public preaching and spiritual instruction became major forms of public speech. In the Islamic intellectual tradition, concepts such as *balagha*, *fasaha*, *bayan* and *mantiq* played an important role in developing speech culture. Eloquence was connected with clarity, beauty, correctness and appropriateness of expression. In Central Asian scholarship, thinkers such as Al-Farabi, Abu Rayhan Beruni, Ibn Sina, Mahmud Zamakhshari, Yusuf Khos Hajib and Alisher Navoi paid great attention to knowledge, language, wisdom and moral speech. Their works show that speech culture was not separated from ethics and education.

The Renaissance period renewed interest in classical rhetoric. Humanist scholars studied Greek and Roman texts and emphasized the role of language in education, diplomacy, literature and civic life. Oratory became a sign of intellectual refinement. A well-educated person was expected to speak clearly, elegantly and logically. This period strengthened the connection between public speech and humanistic education.

The Enlightenment period expanded the social role of oratory. Public debate, scientific discussion, political speeches and journalistic expression became tools of reform and social change. Oratory was used to defend freedom, justice, education and public reason. In this period, speech became closely connected with public opinion. A speaker was no longer only a religious figure, ruler or lawyer; he could also be a scientist, philosopher, teacher, reformer or citizen.

In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, oratory developed together with mass politics, journalism, radio, television and public education. Political leaders, national reformers, educators and social activists used speeches to influence large groups of people. At the same time, history also showed the danger of manipulative speech and propaganda. This proves that oratory can serve both constructive and destructive purposes. Its value depends on the ethical position of the speaker and the truthfulness of the message.

In the modern period, oratory has entered a digital stage. Public speaking now includes online presentations, webinars, video lectures, media interviews and social network communication. The speaker must pay attention not only to voice and content

but also to visual design, digital format, timing, audience interaction and media literacy. Modern oratory therefore requires both traditional rhetorical skills and digital communicative competence.

The results also show that oratory consists of several structural elements. The first element is content. Without meaningful content, speech becomes empty performance. The second element is logic. A speech must have internal order, clear development and reasonable connection between ideas. The third element is language culture, including correct grammar, appropriate vocabulary, pronunciation and style. The fourth element is argumentation, because persuasive speech must be based on evidence. The fifth element is delivery, including voice, intonation, pause, gesture and eye contact. The sixth element is audience awareness. A speaker should understand the age, knowledge level, expectations and emotional state of listeners. The seventh element is ethics. Speech should be truthful, respectful and socially responsible.

### **Discussion**

The historical development of oratory shows that public speaking always appears where society needs leadership, education, justice, debate and collective action. The function of oratory changes from one period to another, but its core remains stable. It helps people organize thought, influence others and participate in social life. This makes oratory an important subject not only for linguistics and literature but also for pedagogy, psychology, sociology and professional education.

In the educational process, oratory has practical value because it develops students' communicative competence. Many students may know theoretical material but fail to express it clearly in oral form. This problem is common in language learning, academic presentations and professional preparation. If a student cannot explain an idea, defend a position, answer questions or speak confidently before an audience, his or her knowledge remains limited in practical use.

Oratory also develops critical thinking. A good speech requires selection of facts, organization of arguments, comparison of views and evaluation of evidence. When students prepare a speech, they learn to distinguish main ideas from secondary details. They also learn to avoid unsupported statements and emotional exaggeration. This is especially important in the modern information environment, where people are often influenced by superficial content, false information and manipulative language.

The formation of oratory skills depends on several factors. Family communication shapes the first speech habits of a child. School develops these habits through reading, discussion, retelling, questioning and presentation. The teacher's speech plays a major role because students often imitate the teacher's language, tone and style of explanation. Literature enriches vocabulary and imagination. Social



environment influences confidence and communication behavior. Regular practice strengthens fluency and reduces fear of public speaking.

One of the main problems in developing oratory is the dominance of written tasks over oral communication in many educational settings. Students often write essays and tests but rarely speak in front of an audience. As a result, they may know grammar and vocabulary but remain passive in oral communication. Another problem is mechanical memorization. Some students learn a text by heart and read it without understanding or real interaction with the audience. This cannot be considered true oratory because public speaking requires independent thinking and live communication.

A further problem is the confusion between external effect and real speech quality. Loud voice, emotional gestures and attractive slides may create a temporary impression, but they cannot replace content, logic and evidence. In academic and professional communication, empty speech quickly loses value. Strong oratory depends on the unity of meaning and form. The speaker must know what to say, why to say it and how to say it appropriately.

Digital communication creates additional challenges. Short videos, fast messages and social media posts often encourage simplified and emotional expression. This may weaken the habit of deep, logical and evidence-based speech. At the same time, digital platforms create new opportunities for developing oratory. Students can record their speeches, analyze mistakes, participate in online debates, prepare video presentations and communicate with wider audiences. The task of education is to use these opportunities responsibly.

The development of oratory should be based on systematic practice. Students need short speeches, debates, role plays, academic presentations, question-answer activities and reflective analysis. They should learn how to choose a topic, formulate a thesis, structure arguments, use examples, maintain eye contact, control voice and answer questions. Assessment criteria should also be clear. A speech should be evaluated according to content, structure, language accuracy, argumentation, delivery, audience interaction and ethical appropriateness.

In foreign language education, oratory is especially useful. It helps students overcome fear of speaking, use vocabulary in meaningful contexts and develop fluency. Public speaking tasks can connect language learning with real communication. For example, students may prepare a short speech on a social issue, present a research topic, defend a project or participate in a debate. These activities develop both linguistic and intellectual skills.

Oratory also has professional importance. A future teacher must explain clearly; a future doctor must communicate carefully with patients; a future lawyer must argue logically; a future manager must motivate a team; a future researcher must present findings convincingly. Therefore, oratory should not be treated as an optional talent. It is a competence that can be developed through theory, practice, feedback and reflection.

### **Conclusion**

The history of oratory demonstrates that speech has always been a powerful instrument of human development. From ancient oral traditions to modern digital communication, oratory has served education, leadership, law, religion, politics, culture and professional activity. Its development passed through several major stages: oral-traditional, ancient Eastern, classical Greek and Roman, medieval religious, Renaissance humanistic, Enlightenment civic, modern mass-media and digital stages.

The study shows that oratory is not limited to eloquent expression. It is a complex competence that includes content, logic, argumentation, language culture, voice, audience awareness and ethical responsibility. The most important condition of effective oratory is the unity of thought, language and moral purpose. A speech may be emotional and beautiful, but it becomes valuable only when it is meaningful, truthful and useful for the audience.

In modern education, oratory should be developed as a practical communicative skill. Students need regular opportunities to speak, discuss, present, defend ideas and receive feedback. This process strengthens confidence, critical thinking, linguistic competence and professional readiness. The development of oratory is therefore not only a linguistic task but also an educational and social necessity.

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