

MAKING A SPEECH IN ENGLISH: HOW TO DO IT MORE EFFECTIVELY.

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Making a speech is a necessary skill for anyone in their life. It becomes an indispensable tool for students and officials in any academic institutes and social organizations to transmit the ideas and persuade the others. This article raises some problems of speech making and summarizes some skills and techniques suggested by some writers. It also encourages students to apply these skills in their learning to apply these skills to be successful in their speech making.

[A] NECESSITY OF SPEECH MAKING

When living in a social community, people have to communicate to help each other in their lives. In a small community such as a family, an alley or a hamlet, people make communication in many different ways. They can talk to each other by using simple words or speeches in their daily conversations. Besides, an owner of a family or a leader of a hamlet or a district will sometimes talk to other people officially. So, how to make a good speech becomes a basic and necessary skill for all people who want to hold any position in the human society.

Being aware of benefits from good presentation skills, children are often educated to express their ideas freely and independently. In all schools from primary schools to universities, students have to engage in schooling activities relating to making presentations. Of course, the students are taught some skills for making effective speeches, but they also learn these skills by participating in many conferences in which there are lots of speeches from different officials in the society from the President of the country to the Governor of a city.

In order to be an official working in the society, a person should learn how to persuade others by his or her speeches. People in the social community can know the working ability and ideas of a person through his or her speeches. An effective presenter has to make a presentation clear, simple, understandable, honest, persuasive, and knowledgeable. This is required of people who want to be successful in leading any group or organization.

[B] SOME MISTAKES IN SPEECH MAKING

There are many speeches presented everyday world-wide, but not all of them can be effective in making the audience satisfied. Some mistakes in delivering speeches are sometimes made and presenters should be warned to avoid them.

The first one is **lack of preparation**. Any speeches must be carefully prepared in all aspects including suitable topics, creative ideas, topic-related solid knowledge, audience and all means for making a successful presentation. If the presenter doesn't prepare well these things, he or she may not get the goals.

Secondly, the presenter cannot be **confident** in presenting ideas to the audience. When standing before thousands of people ready for listening to a presentation, a presenter may feel unconfident in making the speech and if that person doesn't know how to control oneself, the failure may come soon. In some cases, the presenter cannot make clear what he/she wants to transmit to the audience and both sides cannot go with the same way.

Thirdly, there is no **connection between the presenter and the listeners**. Audience is an important factor for any presentations. Without audience, making presentations becomes nonsense. However, there are many cases where the presenter talks and doesn't know who his or her audience is. Some presenters only look at the papers in their hands and read to the audience all the time of the presentation. The presenter talks and talks meanwhile the audience does something else to kill the time or goes away. Such a speech only wastes time and it is completely useless.

Fourthly, the presenters don't know how to **use visual aids** and cannot make use of this means for making their speech more effective.

Another mistake is **lack of time for handling questions** after the presentation. Answering questions after a presentation takes an important role in knowing whether the audience can get the information from the speech or not. However, there are some cases where the presenters seem to be unwilling to handle questions from the audience by allowing too little time for this. Remember that, making presentations must aim at making other know the topic, understand it, react to it, be persuaded to it and act to it. If people show their indifference to the speech, it means that the speech may have no value to them.

[C] EFFECTIVE SPEECH MAKING

In order to be effective in giving speeches, the following factors should be taken into consideration.

First of all, an effective speech requires an **attractive and realistic topic**. So, choosing a suitable topic is essential for all presenters. They have to keep in mind special expertise and other personal experiences on the chosen topic for making presentation more interesting. After having a topic, the presenter has to determine the general purpose of the speech: to inform or to persuade. The speech on information requires the presenter taking the role as a teacher or lecturer to convey information to the audience. So, the information in the speech must be clear, accurate and interesting. The speech on persuasion requires the presenter taking the role as an advocate or a partisan to find the ways to change or structure the attitudes or actions of the audience. So, the presenter has to exhort the audience to follow what are presented positively and enthusiastically.

Secondly, **speech organization** plays an important role in effective speechmaking. All speeches should be organized strategically and 'put together in particular ways to achieve particular results with particular audiences' (Stephen E. Lucas, *The Art of Public Speaking*, 2007). There are always three parts in a speech: introduction, body, and conclusion. The introduction should be concise and shows the audience what happens in the body of the speech. The presenter should determine clearly the main points of the speech and organize them strategically. Each main point should focus on a single idea. The presenter can determine the way to bring the ideas to the audience by chronological order, causal order, problem-solution order... Supporting materials are the backup ideas for the main points. They must be relevant to the ideas presented before. All ideas have to be bound in a logical way. So, connectives must be used to make the speech more unified and coherent. The conclusion of the speech takes the role as a part for making the audience know the ending of the speech and reinforcing their understanding of the ideas of the speech. A conclusion often includes these parts: summarizing the speech, ending with a pertinent quotation, making a dramatic statement and referring to the introduction.

The third one is that presenters have to use **words and sentences** in speeches carefully. Using the words in effective sentences also takes an important role in delivering a speech. The presenters should be aware of the meanings of words and how to use language accurately, clearly, vividly, and appropriately. Words can have denotative or connotative meaning. So, the presenters should know how to use the words in the speech appropriately to avoid being misunderstood in some delicate situations where the audience can be vulnerable due to the connotative meaning of the words. Never use a word without being sure of its meaning. Using language clearly by using concrete words can make the audience grasp the ideas of the speech easier. Making the speech language vivid by using metaphor or rhythm of the language such as parallelism, repetition, alliteration, and antithesis can bring the speech to real life and makes the audience feel interesting.

Fourthly, using **visual aids** appropriately can also contribute to making a successful speech. There are many kinds of visual aids such as diagrams, sketches, graphs, charts, tables, photographs. Presenters can use these appropriately to illustrate what they are talking to the audience and make them understand the ideas in the speech. Visual aids must be designed carefully and easily for the audience to read. Display each aid only while talking about it and display it where the audience can see it without straining. When presenting a visual aid, maintaining eye contact with the listeners. Reading the contents from the screen to the audience is a failure to the presenter.

Another thing for a successful speech is the **audience**. The aim of speech making is to gain a desired response from listeners. The presenters should know something about the psychology of audience. So, they have to identify some main demographic traits of the audience such as age, gender, sexual orientation, religion, group

membership, and racial, ethnic, cultural background. Then, the presenters have to conduct a situational audience analysis to know the traits of the audience for the particular speaking situation. The presenters should know the size of audience, attitudes influenced by the physical setting, disposition towards the topic... In the presentation, the presenters should keep an eye out for audience feedback to recognize if there are any frowns or puzzled looks on the listeners' faces and find the way to deal with this.

Finally, well **handling questions** from the audience also makes an effective speech. Many presenters who are presenting in English as the second language feel it difficult in dealing with the questions from the audience after their speeches. These anxieties may be that the presenters won't be able to understand the questions or find it very difficult to answer; or the presenters may not have the language resources to form a coherent answer. Of course, questions suddenly come from the audience at that moment; so, they are more difficult to prepare for than the presentation itself. Nevertheless, there are some communication skills and techniques of language use that make the process much easier. The presenters should learn how to deal with it more effectively and make the audience satisfied.

[D] HOW TO BECOME A GOOD PRESENTER

A successful speech requires the presenter of being trained and understanding clearly his or her role in delivering the speech. According to Mark Powell (*Presenting in English*, 2002), a good presenter has to know and carry out the following things.

1. Leave nothing to chance

Check everything before you are due to speak - room, seating, visibility, acoustics and equipment.

2. Know exactly how to start

Plan the first minute of your presentation down to the last detail. Try to memorize your opening words. This will help you to sound confident and in control.

3. Get straight to the point

Don't waste time on long boring introductions. Try to make at least one powerful statement in the first two minutes.

4. Talk to your audience

Many of the best presentations sound more like conversations. So, keep referring back to your audience, ask them questions, and respond to their reactions.

5. Know what works

Certain things are always popular with an audience: personal experiences, stories with a message, dramatic comparisons, amazing facts they didn't know. Use them to the full.

6. Be concise

Keep your sentences short and simple. Use deliberate pauses to punctuate your speech.

7. Speak naturally

Don't be afraid to hesitate when you speak, but make sure you pause in the right places. Remember, you are not an actor trying to remember lines. A certain amount of hesitation is actually quite natural.

8. Know your audience

Speak for your audience, not yourself. Take every opportunity to show how much common ground you share with them. Address *their* goals, *their* needs, and *their* concerns.

9. Treat your audience as equals

Never talk down (or up) to your audience. Treat them as equals, no matter who they are.

10. **Be yourself**

As far as possible, speak to five hundred people in much the same way you would speak to five. You will obviously need to project yourself more, but your personality shouldn't change.

11. **Take your time**

Whenever you make a really important point, pause and let the full significance of what you have said sink in . . . before you move on.

12. **Don't make a special effort to be funny**

If you make a joke, don't stop and wait for laughs. Keep going and let the laughter (if it comes) interrupt you.

13. **Let your visuals speak for themselves**

Good visuals are just that - visual. Don't put boring tables of figures and long lines of text on the overhead and read them out. Stick to the main points. Experiment with three-dimensional charts, cartoons, interesting typefaces --- anything to catch your audience's attention.

14. **Never compete with your visuals**

When showing a visual, keep quiet and give people time to take it in. Then make brief comments only. Point to the relevant parts of the visual as you speak. If you want to say more, switch off your projector to do so.

15. **Develop your own style**

Learn from other public speakers, but don't try to copy them. Be comfortable with your own abilities. Don't do anything that feels unnatural for you, just because it works for someone else.

16. **Enjoy the experience**

The secret of being an excellent speaker is to enjoy the experience of speaking - try to enjoy the experience!

17. **Welcome questions from your audience**

When members of your audience ask you a question, it is usually because they have a genuine interest in what you are saying and want to know more. Treat questions as an opportunity to get your message across better.

18. **Finish strongly**

When you are ready to finish your presentation, slow down, and lower your voice. Look at the audience and deliver your final words slowly and clearly. Pause, let your words hang in the air a moment longer, smile, say *Thank you* and then sit down.

[E] CONCLUSION

Communication becomes more and more important in the world today. It requires all people who want to work effectively in any fields to master the ways of informing to and persuading others people through their ability of speech making. Therefore, it is worthwhile for students to learn and practice these skills and techniques for success in their learning as well as working life.

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