

START HERE, SPEAK ANYWHERE! 2E



Angela Elbanna et al.

Borough of Manhattan Community
College

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Angela Elbanna, Aron Bederson, Anthony Naaeke, Carline Romain,
Eva Kolbusz-Kijne, Gillian Bonanno, Janet Douglas-Pryce, Joe
Hutcheson, Mark Janis, Naseer Alomari, Phyllis Niles, Rebecca
Collier, Vincent (Tzu-Wen) Cheng, and Susana Powell

Borough of Manhattan Community College

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

Part I - Basic Principles to Guide You

The first unit lays the foundation for effective public speaking. It begins by critically examining traditional public speaking history and emphasizing its ongoing relevance. Ethical considerations, active listening, and inclusivity for non-native English speakers are explored, highlighting the importance of adapting speech for diverse audiences. The section also covers persuasion across cultures and the use of visual aids to enhance presentations.

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1.1: Questioning and Decentering the History of Public Speaking

Learning Objectives

After reading this chapter, you should be able to

- Describe the historical narratives (i.e., stories about the past) typically presented in public speaking textbooks.
- Explain the social and political power of historical narratives.
- Discuss alternative histories of public speaking.
- Reflect on the diversity of public speaking practices today in relation to your particular cultural identities and speech communities.

Introduction

Winston Smith, the protagonist in George Orwell's dystopian novel *1984*, works for the Ministry of Truth. Winston's job is to revise old newspaper articles to present a version of history consistent with the totalitarian government's current propaganda. Stories and documents that do not fit into the government's ideal design of the past are tossed aside into tubes known as memory holes, in route to be destroyed in burning furnaces beneath the Ministry of Truth. Winston is continually reminded of the ruling Party slogan, "Who controls the past [. . .] controls the future : who controls the present controls the past" (Orwell 33). The slogan implies many important insights about history, the stories that societies tell about the past. History is not a neutral or objective record of the past, but rather a social construct constantly revised to serve present purposes. The telling of history is not full or complete. Stories about the past highlight and erase, include and exclude. Most importantly, history exists within systems of power and can be told in ways to preserve the status of those in power.

I want you, in this chapter, first to critically examine the version of history typically presented in public speaking textbooks and then to consider and reflect on the much wider and richer history of this practice across the globe.

The Typical Historical Narrative of Public Speaking

Public speaking textbooks often retell a very selective history, which focuses on a European tradition of public speaking, namely Greek and Roman contributions. Inevitably there are depictions, like the one below, of white men in togas, deep in thought and discussion.



Fig. 1. *The School of Athens* by Raphael | via [Wikimedia Commons](#), in the public domain

In textbooks, figures such as Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Cicero, and Quintilian are celebrated frequently, while only a few sentences acknowledge public speaking in other cultural groups' histories. For example, in a chapter on the origins of public speaking in *Public Speaking*, Peter DeCaro acknowledges that "the art of public speaking was in practice well before the Greeks," but he

chiefly credits them with systematizing the art of public speaking. From DeCaro's perspective, the art of public speaking has undergone a number of changes in various historical periods and with new technologies in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. However, according to DeCaro, "What we know today as the art of public speaking [. . .] since the days of the Greeks and Romans, St. Augustine, and Descartes [. . .] hasn't changed; it has basically remained the same" (1). In DeCaro's estimation this European tradition is the be all and end all, incapable of improvement even thousands of years later.

Stephan Lucas, in *The Art of Public Speaking*, notes in passing that public speaking has been "studied around the globe for thousands of years," but continues to report:

In classical Greece and Rome, public speaking played a central role in education and civic life. It was also studied extensively. Aristotle's *Rhetoric*, composed during the third century [367–322] B.C., is still considered the most important work on its subject, and many of its principles are followed by speakers (and writers) today [. . .] Over the centuries, many other notable thinkers have dealt with issues of rhetoric, speech, and language—including the Roman educator Quintilian, the Christian preacher St. Augustine, the medieval writer Christine de Pizan, the British philosopher Francis Bacon, and the American critic Kenneth Burke. (Lucas 5)

Lucas concludes this historical summary stating, "Your immediate objective is to apply those [European] methods and strategies in your classroom speeches" (Lucas 5). Europeans are presented as the primary sources of knowledge about the art of public speaking in most textbooks. Put bluntly, many public speaking textbooks are Eurocentric, presenting a narrow worldview that focuses on European culture and history, while excluding cultures and histories in other regions of the world.

Problems with the Eurocentric Narrative

It is often pointed out, justifying the Eurocentric focus, that Greeks and Romans receive so much attention because they developed a special area for the study of public speaking, called rhetoric. In other cultural traditions, however, instruction on public speaking was spread out among lessons on other subjects, such as politics, ethics, poetry and composition. Regardless, fixation on a European tradition of public speaking is problematic for a variety of reasons.

Privileging a Eurocentric history may lead to false conclusions that the art of public speaking is an invention unique to the West, as if it never would have existed without the "enlightened" and "high-culture" of Europe. This assumption is patently false. Even worse, denial of non-Western cultures' public speaking traditions implies their contributions are less important or sophisticated, fueling some of the worst forms of cultural prejudice and bigotry.

Furthermore, standards of public speaking developed by Greeks and Romans are not universals. European approaches to public speaking are expressions of Western culture, most applicable within the context of other Western cultures. In other words, what worked in ancient Greece may not necessarily work as well in other places or times. Eurocentric approaches to public speaking, neglecting the ways in which non-Western cultures understand and practice public speaking, limits a speaker's ability to communicate competently to global audiences.

Stories about the past construct a social reality in the present. The Eurocentric history influences public speaking practices and norms of communication today. Embedded in the European history of public speaking are lessons about what types and styles of speech are valued. An image of "good" speech and a "competent speaker" are implied, establishing a standard for judging speech. If a Eurocentric perspective defines what is "good" public speaking, speakers who don't speak "well" within those Eurocentric constructs may be marginalized and disempowered in public speech. In the worst case, public speaking textbooks present an ethnocentric (i.e. evaluating other people and cultures according to the standards of one's own culture) framework for evaluating speech.

Finally, consider the consequences when a textbook or teacher with authority describes the past, and your ancestors and communities are not included. This lack of representation erases those voices in the past, while disempowering them in the present. For example, research since the 1970s has continually found an education achievement gap between minority and white students ("Racial and Ethnic Achievement Gaps"). While many factors contribute to this achievement gap (racism, unequal funding, biased standardized testing, etc.), a lack of cultural representation in educational materials certainly contributes to the problem. In fact, recent studies suggest that culturally inclusive education programs, focusing on minority students' cultures and identities, leads to significant improvement in academic performance (attendance, GPA, graduation rates, etc.) among those students. The critical thinking skills and self-esteem developed from being represented and included benefits students' education (Anderson 2016).

I believe that recognizing the diversity of public speaking practices in the past is a crucial first step in valuing the diversity of public speaking practices and creating a more inclusive and equitable public today. I will, in the rest of this chapter, direct attention

to multiple alternative histories of public speaking. An essential part of becoming a better speaker involves recognizing yourself, and speakers you identify with, in the history (and hence the future) of public speaking.

Note that the history that follows, like all others, is selective and incomplete. I have only so much space, and choices must be made. To learn more about the politically biased histories in textbooks, check out the interactive article “[Two States. Eight Textbooks. Two American Stories](#)” from *The New York Times*.

Public Speaking Before and Beyond the Greeks

There are multiple histories of public speaking, beginning at different times and places around the globe. In fact, there is absolutely no doubt that attention to public speaking predates the Greeks by thousands of years.

The Fertile Crescent



Fig. 2. The Akkadian Empire, ca. 2340 BCE, was located between the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers. | Map of Fertile Crescent by Nafsadh, via [Wikimedia Commons](#), licensed [CC BY-SA 4.0](#)

Opportunities for public speaking go as far back as when civilizations, such as the Sumerian and Akkadian Empires in Mesopotamia, first began to develop. These earliest civilizations were located on the banks of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, in the area of present day Iraq, Iran, Turkey, Syria, and Kuwait.

In these first civilizations, a council of elders, made up of older, experienced, and wealthier members of society, would debate issues impacting their city. Council members would speak, trying to build consensus among the council. In the end, however, an assembly of adult males of the city would make and confirm final decisions. These first forms of public speaking and participatory policy-making are described in the epic poem *Gilgamesh and Aga* (1900–1600 BCE).

The poem describes a conflict between the rulers, named Gilgamesh and Aga, of two cities. Aga sends a message to Gilgamesh threatening war and ordering him to give over the city and his people to become slaves. Gilgamesh gathers and speaks to the council of elders who decide they should submit and allow Aga to take over the city. Gilgamesh disagrees with the council’s decision and summons the full assembly of men in the city, speaking directly to them and making an appeal to defend the city. The assembly agrees they should fight Aga. When Aga’s army attacks the city, ultimately he is captured and concedes to Gilgamesh. The story of Gilgamesh and Aga served to model ideal forms of public speaking and decision-making processes in Mesopotamian societies.



Fig. 3. Story of Gilgamesh and Aga on a clay tablet produced during the Old Babylonian period in southern Iraq; Sulaymaniyah Museum, Iraq | photos (left and right) by [Osama Shukir Muhammed Amin](#), via Wikimedia Commons, licensed [CC BY-SA 4.0](#)

Ancient Africa

Public speaking traditions can also be found in ancient African societies. There is much evidence that ancient Egyptians valued eloquence and realized the power of speech. One document revealing the importance of speech in ancient Egyptian society is the “Story of the Eloquent Peasant,” which was a rhythmic poem composed between 2000–1800 BCE.



Fig. 4. Forty lines from the introduction of “The Tale of the Eloquent Peasant” on papyrus fragments | via [Trustees of the British Museum](#), licensed [CC BY-NC-SA 4.0](#)

The author of the story is anonymous, which is common during this period. No complete version of the story has survived, however, the overall arch of the tale has been reconstructed from fragments of four incomplete scrolls. The story involves a peasant named Khun-Anup, whose goods and donkey are stolen on the way to market by a greedy landowner and vassal to the Pharaoh, named Nemtynakht. The peasant tries to recover his goods and appeals to Rensi, a local magistrate and high official, by delivering a powerful persuasive speech. Rensi is so impressed by the peasant's eloquent speech that he transcribes it and sends a written copy to the Pharaoh. The Pharaoh is also impressed by the speech and orders the peasant to keep pleading his case so more speeches can be recorded. The peasant is exhausted and, after nine days of speaking, refuses to speak more. Rensi is so inspired by the final speech he orders all of Nemtynakht's property be given to the peasant as a reward for his eloquence. The story reveals much about ancient Egyptian ethics and justice, but also how prized eloquent speech was in that culture.

The most important document of public speaking in ancient Egypt is a handbook called the *Instruction of Ptahhotep* (2375–2350 BCE). The *Instruction of Ptahhotep* is considered to be one of the earliest surviving books, as well as the oldest known rhetorical handbook. The author, Vizier Ptahhotep, served as an important minister during the reign of Pharaoh Djedkare Isesi.



Fig. 5. Statue of Ptahhotep by [Panegyrics of Granovetter](#), via [Flickr](#), licensed [CC BY-SA 2.0](#)

Ptahhotep, who lived to be very old, was getting ready for his son to take over his work. The handbook was intended to provide instruction to his son and other future ministers. Advice on speech is given throughout the book. In one maxim from the handbook Ptahhotep states, “No artist’s skills are perfect; Good speech is more hidden than greenstone. Yet may be found among the maids at the grindstones” (qtd. in Kennedy 129). In other words, naturally talented speakers are uncommon, but speaking is a skill that can be sharpened with study and practice. The handbook also provides advice for communicating with people across the Egyptian social hierarchy, including: those more powerful, those that are equal, and those who are not equal. For example, when meeting a person more powerful, the reader is instructed to “Fold your arms, bend your back, To flout him will not make him agree with you [. . .] Your self control will match his pile (of words)” (qtd. in Kennedy 129). There are some important differences between Egyptian and Greek rhetoric. Egyptians focused less on analyzing examples of speech to identify argument, organization, or stylistic devices and instead taught an attitude that would make one’s speech effective while maintaining harmony in the social order (Fox 21–22).

Even in other ancient African cultures that hadn’t developed written language yet, there is evidence of public speaking traditions. Kermit Campbell studied early African rhetorical traditions in Nubia (present-day Sudan), Axum (present-day Ethiopia, Sudan, and Yemen), and the Mali Empire (spanning a range of present-day West African countries). According to Campbell, “Africa has quite varied and complex uses of oral and written language, and any general theory or concept of rhetoric must take these into account” (258–259). Ancient societies across Africa had a great diversity of public speaking traditions and practices.

China

China, which has written language dating back to the second millennium (2000–1000 BCE), has an extensive public speaking tradition. The Chinese had a variety of terms to conceptualize different aspects of public speaking, including: *yan* (language, speech), *ci* (artistic expression), *shui* (face-to-face persuasion), and *bian* (disputation and argumentation), which is considered most central to ancient Chinese theories of speech and persuasion (Lu 4). Speech did not have its own division in the traditional Chinese arts; instead lessons about speech were scattered across a variety of subjects. According to Robert Oliver, in Greece public speaking was so important it had to be explored and considered as a special field of knowledge. In Asian cultures, rhetoric was so important that it was considered united and in harmony with other fields of knowledge, such as ethics, politics, philosophy, and the arts (Oliver 10). Effective speech was prized in ancient China and texts of exemplar speeches were preserved to serve as instructional models for invention and style. Examples of effective speech were often addressed to an individual ruler or a small

group of political advisors. Chinese rhetoric was not concerned with speech addressed to the general public or techniques to address a mass audience.

There are hundreds of formal speeches attributed to rulers, officials, and philosophers, which provide a body of rhetorical texts unmatched even in Greece and Rome (Campbell 142). These model speeches can be found in a variety of sources, but one of the most extensive collections is in *Shu Ching*, also known as the *Book of History*.

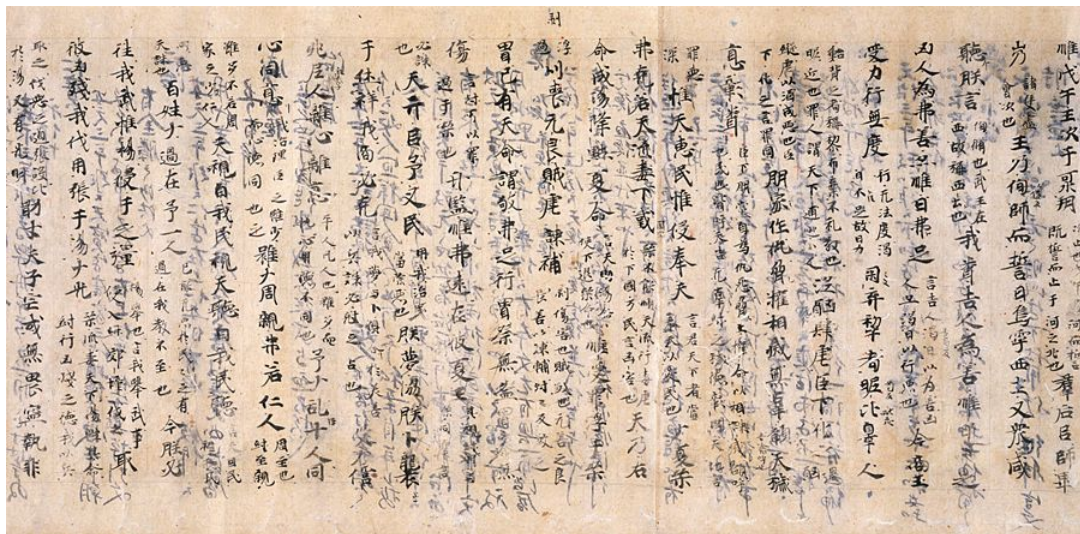


Fig. 6. A page of an annotated *Shu Ching* manuscript from the 7th century; Tokyo National Museum | via [Wikimedia Commons](#), in the public domain

Shu Ching is a collection of writings, by anonymous authors, about events involving kings who reigned from 2200 to 628 BCE. The book became an important part of education for civil service. Over fifty speeches by emperors, generals, and other high officials are included in *Shu Ching*. Speeches in *Shu Ching* tend to fall into three categories: deliberative speech aimed at persuading an individual or audience of high officials; announcements by a ruler or high official that describe a public policy or response to a political problem; or instructions from a high official to a ruler where the speaker is honest and avoids flattery. Robert Oliver summarizes key insight from the *Shu Ching*, stating that “to rule well meant to communicate honestly, intelligently, and effectively...Ministers must be courageous in speaking with utmost frankness to their monarchs [. . .] Social harmony and individual dignity...could not be attained by evasive speaking, by false flattery, or by curbing honest criticism” (102–120). Important aspects of the Chinese rhetorical tradition are also found across the work of various Chinese philosophers, including Confucius, Mencius, Mo Tze, and Lao-Tzu. In the *Analects*, the most important sources of Confucius’ teachings, speech is considered at several points. For example, Confucius is reported to have said “One who has accumulated moral power will certainly also possess eloquence; but he who has eloquence does not necessarily possess moral power” (qtd. in Kennedy 153). Like other ancient cultures, Chinese standards for effective speech emphasized consensus-building, social harmony, and respect for authority. However, the degree in which the Chinese tradition emphasized frankness and sincerity in political contexts is not found in other ancient societies.

India

India also had a rich public speaking tradition, although documentation is scarcer than the records in ancient Africa and China. Indians, despite having developed a system of written communication, placed a higher value on speech, and it served as the primary form of communication for literary and scientific activity (Campbell 172; Oliver 22). Unlike in Egypt and China, historical records and literature were transmitted through the spoken word, memorized and recited to pass down among generations. Written records that have survived were recorded centuries after being spoken. Ancient Indians did speak in public settings, among an audience, but speech was often limited to those higher in the social hierarchy, members of the highest Brahmin caste and religious priests (Hindu, Buddhist, etc.). While public assemblies were elite, there is evidence of early forms of participatory politics in ancient India. Attention to public speaking in ancient India is present in a collection of hymns, the *Rig-Veda* (1500–1000) BCE, which originated from the region of present day Pakistan.

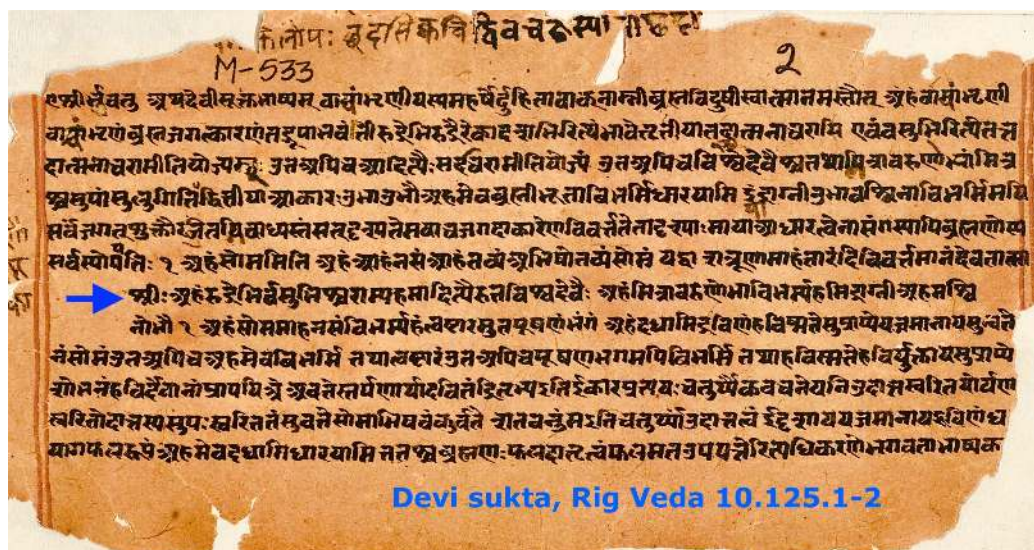


Fig. 7. Lines from the *Rig-Veda* | photo with annotations by Ms. Sarah Welch, via [Wikimedia Commons](#), licensed [CC BY-SA 4.0](#)

Some of the hymns describe the *Sabha*, an assembly of elders, and elected councils where public speaking, debate, and free discussion would occur about local affairs. The councils seemed to have a role in naming kings, but also maintained independence from their rulers. The goal of debate was not to win a majority vote, but rather to arrive at consensus and create unity among the council. The final hymn of *Rig-Veda* encapsulates the ideal function of the council to achieve consensus, “Assemble, speak together; let your minds be all of one accord . . . The place is common, the assembly, common the mind, so be their minds united . . . One and the same be your resolve, and be your minds of one accord; United be the minds of all that may happily agree” (qtd. in Oliver 26). Speech was not to be directed by individual interests or described in personal terms. The effectiveness of a speaker lied in the ability to express common beliefs, values, and interests of the entire community.

The role of debate in ancient India, especially among the Brahmin caste, is highlighted in a collection of Hindu philosophical texts known as the *Upanishads*. The *Upanishads* are a series of collected sermons and dialogues. The *Upanishads* serve as instructions for how members of the elite Brahmin caste should conduct themselves in speech and debate. A devotion to truth and resistance to persuasive speech driven by personal preferences is clear. One Brahmin is scolded in a dialogue for a self-absorbed speech where they showed off their superior knowledge. “Let a Brahmin renounce learning and become a child . . . Let him not seek after many words, for that is mere weariness of the tongue” (qtd. in Oliver 28). A clear characteristic of ancient Indian rhetoric is the emphasis on consensus and ability to speak on behalf of community values and interests. This stands in stark contrast to the majority vote system and emphasis on individualism that influenced public speaking practices in ancient European cultures. Later in ancient India, by the third century (300–400 CE), attention to literary composition became common. Indians closely studied lyric poetry and developed a “science of figures,” or *alamkara-shastr*, dividing style into several types and qualities, such as clarity, vigor, and compactness.

The Americas

North American Indians also had a vibrant public speaking tradition. To make any generalization about Native American public speaking practices is challenging, as the population consisted of several hundred distinct groups, speaking many different languages, and living a variety of lifestyles ranging from hunter-gatherer, agriculturalists, to tighter knit communities comparable to urban societies. Public speaking norms and practices passed down through generations orally, so written documentation of ancient public speaking practices is scarce. Most documentation comes in the form of reports from European conquerors, colonists, missionaries, and traders. These documents are problematic because they are written from the perspective of the white colonizer. For example, one of the earliest descriptions of Native American oratory is documented in *The Florida*, which provides a favorable description of Hernando De Soto’s brutal exploration of the present-day southeastern United States.



Fig. 8. This illustration showing Spanish brutality was made by Theodore de Bry for a German edition of *Brevísima relación de la destrucción de las Indias* (“A Short Account of the Destruction of the Indies”) by Bartolome de las Casas, 1552. De Soto and his army destroyed and enslaved many of the indigenous communities his army encountered during their exploration of what is now the southeastern United States. | via [Wikimedia Commons](#), in the public domain

The author describes the speeches they encountered and remarks, Native American chiefs “appeared to have been influenced by the most famous officers of Rome [. . .] and that the youths appeared to have been trained in Athens” (qtd. in Campbell 84). Another portion of documentation of Native American rhetorical traditions comes in the form of records of Indian responses to white settlers at treaties and conferences, which were published in newspapers. Despite the limited and often biased records that exist, Native American societies tended to be more egalitarian in public speaking. It was common for both men and women to be able to speak in assemblies. The goal of deliberation was to produce communal consensus. While there isn’t much evidence of judicial speech, Native Americans developed rich epideictic, or ceremonial speech practices for funerals, war, and other ritual occasions.



Fig. 9. Image accompanying a *huehuetlatolli* recorded in Bernardino de Sahagún’s encyclopedia on Aztec culture, 1577 CE; Medicea Laurenziana Library, Florence | via the [World Digital Library](#), in the public domain

The Aztecs developed a rich public speaking tradition, with a pictograph writing system and formal education that included specific training in public speaking, much like schools in Greece. Bernardino de Sahagún, a Franciscan Friar who arrived in Mexico in 1529, studied and wrote an encyclopedia on Aztec society that included transcriptions of over eighty speeches known as *huehuetlatolli*, or “speeches of elders.”

These speeches were used as models of ideal speech and were studied in schools for priest and warrior classes. Sahagún says that boys were thoroughly instructed in speech [and] he who did not speak well, who did not greet people properly, they pricked [with thorns]. According to Sahagún, in Aztec culture “wise, superior, and effective rhetoricians were held in high regard. And they

elected these to be high priests, lords, leaders, and captains, no matter how humble their estate” (qtd. in Campbell 101). Emphasis on speech in Aztec education shares similarities with the other cultural traditions described in this chapter.

The Legacy of Colonization

Colonization is one of the main reasons a European tradition of public speaking gains such prominence around the globe. Colonization relied upon not only forms of physical violence, but also intellectual violence. Untold numbers of oral traditions and non-Western public speaking practices have been lost to history, viciously displaced by the traditions of colonizers. As Europeans colonized the Middle East, Africa, Asia, and the Americas, they carried their texts and intellectual traditions. However, it’s not as if the colonized took the European tradition and approach to public speaking as is. Instead the European tradition was revised to fit within their culture and public speaking traditions. For example, medieval Muslim scholars studied the Greek rhetorical tradition and Aristotle, imagining an “Arabic Aristotle,” and adapting it to fit within Islamic culture. Muslim scholars, in their own commentary on rhetoric and oratory, transmitted Arabic concepts of oratory and rhetoric back to Europe (Borrowman 342).

There are multiple rhetorical traditions and histories of public speaking. This expanded history reveals what appears to be universal interest and attention to public speaking, not something singular or unique to European cultures. Almost all cultures have a word to describe someone skilled at public speaking, such as orator. Many cultures have terms designating particular types of speaking situations. Many cultures also have terms for stylistic devices in speech, such as metaphors and proverbs. Handbooks and guidelines for “good” speaking were present in several cultures, particularly in early literate cultures, such as ancient Egypt, China, and the Aztecs. Otherwise, in societies without written language, norms and ideal practices of public speaking were taught by elders and passed down orally. A range of public speaking practices and traditions existed (and persist) across many cultures.

Conclusion

Marcus Garvey, the Jamaican political activist who built a Pan-African movement inspiring solidarity between all ethnic groups of African descent, famously declared that a people “without knowledge of their past history, origin, and culture is like a tree without roots” (qtd. in Dadzie 11). My goal in this chapter was to critique the Eurocentric history that dominates public speaking textbooks. I attempted to provide a more inclusive history of public speaking. I hope at this point you can find a space in the past for yourself, and your ancestors, within this expanded history of public speaking.

I also hope that you see a space for your own unique public voice in the present. I want to urge you, in closing, to take some time to reflect on your own cultural identities and how they influence your communication style and approach to public speaking. As you practice the art of public speaking do not deny or silence those aspects of your identity. Be proud of the cultural traditions that make your voice ring unique. No matter your identity or communities, there is a place for your voice in the past, present, and future of public speaking.

Review Questions

1. Consider the statement, “History is never neutral or objective.” What does this mean? Do you agree or disagree? Why or why not? Can you think of examples that support or contradict this statement? What does this have to do with public speaking?
2. What are the implications and consequences of emphasizing European history and norms of public speaking norms at schools and in textbooks?

Class Activities

- Have students consider and write a response to the question below. After they have drafted their responses, pair or group students to share and discuss their responses. Next, bring the class together for a group discussion about the range of qualities that are part of being a “good” speaker and the diversity of public speaking practices.
 - Who is someone from your community or that you share similarities with, in terms of your cultural identity or background, you consider to be a “good” public speaker? What characteristics and qualities make that person a “good” speaker? You may also explain why you connect and identify with that speaker.
 - Note that responses do not need to be tied to “traditional” public speakers or political speech. There are many different types of public speakers—comedians, entertainers, religious leaders, various types of professionals, etc. Also, don’t forget the public speakers you’ve had contact with in your own daily lives and experiences.
- Have students complete the social identity wheel worksheet. Ask students to consider how aspects of their cultural identities and affiliation with various speech communities influence their communication style and public speaking.

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1.2: The Importance of Public Speaking

Learning Objectives

After reading this chapter, you should be able to

- Understand the specific components of the public speaking process and begin to apply the skills involved.
- Apply some strategies to cope with the normal nerves that may arise when speaking in public.
- Understand the differences between communicating with an audience in person and communicating online.

Do you like speaking in public? If you don't, you are not alone. While the fear of public speaking is not people's greatest fear as it is often reported, it does affect at least 25% of the population. The clinical term for the fear of speaking in public is *glossophobia* (Tsausides 1). This chapter will give you information on the importance of public speaking as it relates to you and explain some of the important components of the communication process.

Although it is feared, public speaking is also one of the most respected activities an individual can engage in and master. Since ancient times, in cultures throughout the world, students have studied and practiced the art of oration. Every culture has their own sets of traditions. "Before the advent of the written word, historical events were transmitted to future generations through the use of compelling stories. A significant approach of human capacity was the ability to preserve its historical heritage using narratives. Every civilization has a historical and cultural heritage which people hold dear" (Nduka 91). Throughout the world, those who had the ability to speak effectively and command the attention of groups of listeners rose to become prominent leaders in all walks of life, from political rule to the arts.

From the time humankind began to congregate in groups and listen to one person tell a story or address their social/communal needs, speakers have grappled with the anxiety that speaking in groups can create. The goal of this text is to help you understand the process of communication on a one-to-one basis as well as in a larger context and give you tools to manage the anxiety that may arise in this process. As you study and practice the process of public speaking, you will begin to gain the sense that YOU are in charge of your experience.

You may feel that you are new to the discipline of public speaking, but you have already been practicing this skill for many years. Every time you engage with a friend, stranger or business associate you are developing this skill. Learning to articulate your thoughts and feelings is important in your personal relationships as well. You will have to employ your listening skills with a partner as well as be able to interpret their reactions to you. While there are differences between speaking with someone one-to-one or delivering a prepared speech to a specific audience, you have employed many basic skills that are a part of any communication process.

Being able to speak in public is also extremely important to our nation's political process. Our political system is based on candidates being able to voice their views on important issues publicly as well as debate them with others. President Biden has worked with a stuttering issue since childhood; he has become a strong public speaker and participated successfully in debates with challenging opponents. Other well known actors and politicians who overcame stuttering and became prominent in their fields include Winston Churchill, James Earl Jones, Tiger Woods, Marilyn Monroe and Samuel L. Jackson. The art of oration is still a highly valued skill. In general, successful political candidates and community leaders have mastered it and use this skill in their work and campaigns.

You will also see that communication skills are vital to your success in the workplace. You will need to be able to articulate your interest and qualifications for a job interview. You will have to make presentations on the job and communicate effectively with your colleagues. Your ability to master these skills will determine your level of success.

As communication has become increasingly digital, some may think that the need to refine one's speaking skills are no longer necessary. As you may have already observed, this is not the case. Unfortunately, online communication does not always employ and develop our communication skills. As you reflect on your experience during the pandemic and your experience in the Zoom classroom and other online activities, you may have noticed that some students used technology to enhance their connection to others while some used it to distance themselves. If you have tried presenting in a Zoom room without seeing the faces of your classmates, you may have noticed that you are not able to "read" the reactions of your audience to the delivery and content of your speech. By "reading" the reactions of the audience, I am referring to observing their body language and facial expressions. While we cannot know what the audience is thinking, we can get a sense of their response to your presentation by their physical reactions to it. Keep in mind, however, that their reactions are not always about you. They may be thinking of other things while listening to

you speak. Perhaps you are just observing their general attitudes and expressions. If you have ever been in the position of listening to someone speak without seeing their facial expressions and body language, you will know that it is difficult. When using communication technologies such as Zoom, you still employ some important skills used in the communication process: organizing ideas into a cohesive structure to present them, targeting your message to a specific audience of listeners, and modifying your speech to fit the context of communication. However, you are not developing all of the tools used when presenting live and in person.

Whether in a prepared or impromptu speech you can continue to develop your public speaking/communication skills both online or in person, and in all communication contexts. You are using your voice, body, and presentation skills to reach your audience when making a presentation in public you just need to use these tools in a different manner. This text will give you the skills to use your body to support the process of public speaking and communication as well as strategies to organize your ideas into an effective speech.

Tips for Handling Anxiety/Excitement

First, it is important to address one of the blocks to your success in getting up and speaking in front of others. As I have mentioned, public speaking is regarded as one of the primary fears people have. There are tools you can use to handle the nervousness you may experience when communicating in public.

Breathe

To begin, remember to breathe! Sit or stand up straight and take a deep supported breath from the diaphragm, a thin skeletal muscle that separates the abdomen from the chest. It contracts and flattens when you inhale, creating a vacuum effect that pulls air into the lungs. When you exhale, the diaphragm relaxes, and the air is pushed out of the lungs (Santos-Longhurst).

As you inhale and exhale, whether you are sitting or standing, keep a tall straight spine. Release any tension or anxiety with each exhalation, and breathe in fresh energy as you inhale. Breathing from the diaphragm will feel different if you are used to taking regular chest breathes. One way to start breathing this way is to put your hands on your belly and blow the air in your lungs OUT! Your belly should contract as you push the air out. Then release the belly and diaphragm and the air should rush back into the lungs/ As you inhale and exhale, whether you are sitting or standing, keep a tall straight spine. Release any tension or anxiety with each exhalation, and breathe in fresh energy as you inhale. Gently drop your head forward, then back and side to side. Release any tension in your neck and let your head “sit” on top of your spine. You should now be lined up well!

Warm Up Your Face, Mouth, and Tongue

The next exercise is helpful in warming up the muscles of the face, mouth, and tongue. Place your hands on your cheeks and the side of your nose. Gently make the sound HMMM and feel your lips and nose vibrate. Your cheeks and nose are natural resonators when you speak and sing; together, they can be called, “the mask.” Another sound to make to wake up your natural resonators in the “NG” sound. Raise your tongue to the roof of your mouth and make feel the NG sound in your nose and throat.

Use the Energy in Your System

Try to change the way you think about the “fight or flight” reaction, which your body may move into when you approach a public speaking situation. Think about the energy moving through your body not as fear but as excitement. Actually, the “fight or flight” response helps prime your body to handle any potential danger you may face in an actual life or death situation. While public speaking may feel like a life or death situation, it is not. You can also think of the excitement you may experience when you are making public presentations as being in a “highly adrenalized” state. Use the energy coursing through your system to fuel your presentation. YOU are in charge.

Think Positively

There are other tools you can use to manage your energy before a presentation. Think positively about the outcome. See yourself delivering your presentation with ease and grace. You may know mantras or personal affirmations that you can use to increase your confidence and sense of well-being and focus. Sometimes, just taking a moment to relax and focus on your breathing can be enough to calm and center you before a presentation.

This video shows Qui Gong instructor Nadiya Nottingham demonstrating hand mudras designed to dispel fear and suffering. The more you make presentations, the better you will get at mastering your pre-performance anxiety as well as your performance nerves.

Be Prepared

Also, taking the time to be prepared before a presentation will do a great deal to bring down your anxiety level. When you see politicians deliver speeches or listen to keynote speakers address their audience, you are hearing the words of a well-organized and carefully crafted speech. Some of these speakers even have the assistance of other writers helping them write and organize their speeches. You are not in this position. While it is a good idea to practice your speech in front of family and friends and get feedback from them on the structure and organization of the speech, it is up to you to write a speech that will impact others as you intend. Working from a well-organized outline that carefully lays out your speech will help ensure the effectiveness of your presentation and diminish any fear you may have in making it. The more you tailor your speech to fit the occasion and audience you are addressing, the more relaxed and confident you will feel.

Get Experience

To recap, getting experience speaking in public will help you master your nerves. Practice builds confidence. As you apply the tools you have learned, they will become second nature to you. All of the tools I have mentioned call on you to strengthen certain “muscles”. This is one of the reasons working on your public speaking skills is so important. You will use these new muscles in many aspects of your personal and professional lives. You will also develop your organizational and critical thinking skills as you create effective outlines to assist you in your speeches. Regardless of the type of presentation you make—informative, persuasive or a group debate—you will develop your organizational and critical thinking skills as you do your research and boil down your ideas into a cohesive presentation.

Listen

Listening is another extremely important component of the communication process. Even when making a presentation, you need to “listen” to the feedback you are getting from your audience. Also, there may be a question/answer component to your presentation. You will need to listen carefully to any audience member in order to address whatever issue they raise.

Listening in a high-pressure situation requires focus and concentration which you will strengthen as you gain experience (Lucas 19). You do not listen only with your ears. You need to observe and “read” the body language of your audience. What are they communicating to you as you make your presentation? You may need to adjust your presentation depending on the feedback you are getting from your audience.

Communication is a dynamic process. As Dr. Vincent Tzu-Wen Cheng, another contributing writer to this textbook, points out, “Messages are being given and received through the five sensory channels (i.e. visual, audio, tactile, olfactory and gustatory channels. In general, the greater the number of channels used, the more in depth and accurate communication will be” (Cheng). There is also an [entire chapter on listening](#) in this OER textbook written by Professor Janet Douglas-Pryce that goes into more depth about the complexities of the listening process.

The Communication Process

Speaking in public will demand that you master all of the components of the communication process. This is one of the reasons public speaking is so important. In order to communicate effectively, it is important to understand how the process works. There has been a great deal written about communication theory. One of the first examples was written by Claude Shannon and Warren Weaver for Bell Telephone in 1948 with the goal of increasing the efficiency of telephone communication (Novack). It mentions the seven main components of the communication process.

1. There is the *speaker* or the person sending the message to their listeners. When you give a speech, you are the speaker. You gain the attention of your audience based on your credibility and the interest you have in your subject.
2. The process of conveying information starts with the speaker/communicator *encoding* their ideas into symbols; letters and words. The listener decodes these messages and make meaning out of these symbols.
3. It is very important that the *message* that the speaker sends is the one that the listener receives. If you have ever played the game of telephone in which one person whispers a message into their neighbor’s ear and the message is passed along to the last person in the circle, you have seen how the final message can be completely altered from the way it started. Remember, you use your entire body to communicate. Every hand gesture, tilt of the head or your posture as you sit or stand says something as you send or receive messages. Also, the words of your speech may say one thing, but if the feeling you are presenting behind the words doesn’t support them, you are sending a mixed message to your audience and they will interpret it in a variety of ways.
4. Another factor that will impact the message that your audience receives is the *channel* through which you communicate. You may have noticed that communicating in a Zoom room or other online platform is very different than communicating in the

classroom. As I mentioned earlier, communicating in a Zoom room with the camera on has a different impact on your audience than communicating with the camera off. The channel is the medium through which you communicate: in person, on the phone, with a microphone, through Zoom, or on TV. All of these means of communicating will have an impact on the way you speak. You will need to modify the way you communicate to accommodate whatever channel you are using. Speaking to a large group with a microphone is very different than talking to a group in the classroom. Presenting a speech on television without a studio audience will require a different delivery than talking on the telephone or in person and make immediately accessing the response of your audience impossible. There may be reviews or ratings to gauge how your presentation went on television.

5. As I mentioned earlier, *listening* is a vital part of the communication process. If there wasn't anyone receiving your message, your speech would have no life. Think of the question "if a tree falls in the forest and there is no one there to hear it, is there a sound?" The listener needs to be a part of the communication cycle to receive the sound. Keep in mind that the listener will filter the message of the speaker through their own experience. This is a factor that the speaker needs to keep in mind and prepare their speech to suit the background of their audience.
6. Another factor that impacts the communication process is *interference* of the message as it is being communicated. Interference can take a variety of forms. It could be from an external source such as noise outside of the room you are speaking in or internal- when the listeners may be distracted by personal thoughts or physical discomfort.
7. *Feedback* is the last step of the Shannon-Weaver model of communication. After the message of the sender is encoded, sent through the communication channel and finally decoded by the receiver, it is processed by them and they respond by giving feedback to the speaker which impacts further communication. Feedback can take various forms. It can be verbal and take the form of questions, sometimes heckling, or even cheers. Very often, however, it is nonverbal and is conveyed through the listener's body language. How are they engaging with the speaker physically? Are they leaning in to listen or turning away? All of this is information the speaker receives and impacts the way they deliver their message.

Finally, there is the context or *situation* in which the communication takes place. Where is the communication event happening? Is it in a classroom or a courtroom? Outside or inside? Are you speaking at a graduation ceremony or a wedding? Are you trying to have an intimate conversation in a noisy restaurant? The situation where you are speaking will have an impact on the communication.

Later Additions to the Shannon-Weaver Model of Communication

The communication model as described by Shannon and Weaver was later developed by David Berlo in 1960. Berlo looked at how the specifics of each aspect of the communication model impacts the way the message is received. Berlo incorporates the attitudes, knowledge, communication skills, and culture of both the sender and the receiver of the message into his analysis and discusses how this impacts the way the message is interpreted. Berlo's study takes into account how the background of the receiver and sender as well as all of the variables associated with each affect the communication that takes place and how they are interpreted (Novack).

The communication model as described by Shannon and Weaver was later developed by Wilbur Schramm which included a "Frame of Reference" or "field of experience" which made reference to a common field of experience between the sender and the recipient of the message. Schramm's communication model, which was completed by 1971 took into account the impact that an individual's experience and culture had on their communication. It also stated that the sender's and receiver's common experience need to overlap to create shared meaning (Blythe). Without this shared meaning, there is bound to be a lack of understanding between the sender and the receiver.

An Example of the Communication Process

There is an excellent example of the communication process in the play *The Miracle Worker* by William Gibson which chronicles the story of a young woman Helen Keller, who lost her sight and hearing at a young age. Her teacher Annie Sullivan is trying to teach her sign language. The scene I am discussing takes place outside at a water pump where Annie is trying to get Helen to fill a water pitcher while signing into her hand the sign language formations of the word water. Helen had learned a few words as a young child, water being one of them as well as mother and father before she lost her senses to a febrile illness at 19 months; scarlet fever, rubella or encephalitis. She had even begun to speak and had learned the word *water*, which she pronounced "wa-wa" (Gilsdorf).

Helen's teacher encoded the letters for the word *water* into sign language hand formations which she signed into Helen's hands. Helen then mimicked the hand signs back into Annie's hands until the moment she makes a connection and has an "Ah ha" moment. She realizes that the symbols her teacher is signing into her hand represent the word "water" which she had learned long

ago.” The two have a moment of *shared experience* as described in the Schramm model of communication. Helen also made the larger connection that things in the world have a name and she immediately wanted to know the name for everything in her immediate environment. Her teacher realized the connections Helen has made and yelled to her family inside their home “she knows!” This moving drama and excellent example of the communication model is dramatized in [this famous scene from the movie adaptation of *The Miracle Worker*](#) (1962) played by the actors Anne Bancroft and Patty Duke.

Public Speaking in a Global Context

by Professor Valerie Small, Ph.D.

In the context of our ever-changing national and international demographics, public speaking is even more important. In 2020, the U.S. Census Bureau released a report indicating that the national headcount shows a more diverse nation than previously perceived. The report revealed that nearly four of ten Americans identify with a race or ethnic group other than White and suggested that the 2010 to 2020 decade was the first in the nation’s history in which the White population declined in numbers.

When presenting specifically to an American audience, one should know the cultural composition of the audience to avoid any conflicts and cultural offenses that might arise from unawareness. In addition to reviewing the [chapter on audience analysis](#) in this book, here are a few suggestions for preparing for your speech.

- Meanings are attached to nonverbal communication, e.g., facial and hand gestures, eye movements, touch, body posture, etc.; hence, it is imperative that one abstains from assumptions that all audiences interpret these messages or signals the same way.
- Remember that the United States is a “global village” and according to William Frey’s analysis of the U.S. Census 2020 report, nearly 40% of the population belongs to a racial or ethnic minority group. Therefore, the paramount concern should be to treat the audience with dignity and act with integrity.
- “People in every culture possess values related to their personal relationships, religion, occupation, and so forth. Understanding these values can help you deliver your message sensitively.”
- Use language that is understandable, appropriate, and unbiased towards the audience. For example, classmates and other audiences may speak in an ethnic vernacular, such as “Spanglish”, the combination of English and Spanish. Other vernaculars may reflect where they live and use regionalisms or words and phrases that are used in a specific part of a country; and finally, some may use jargon, the specialized language of a profession or hobby.
- Exhibiting cultural sensitivity also means acknowledging the offenses that can transpire when ethnocentrism occurs. Ethnocentrism is the belief that one’s own group or culture is superior to all other groups or cultures (Lucas 2015, 24). This superiority stems from one’s partiality to his or her cultural background.

In summary, it is crucial that one understands the communication process and how people interpret events, language, and texts differently. This depends on one’s frame of reference, which is guided by personal attitudes, beliefs, culture, values and so forth. Cultural differences, both within American subcultures and across international lines, affect all of our efforts to communicate in the classroom and in the community, and we need to make strenuous and sincere efforts to bridge cultural divides and emphasize what we will all have in common.”

Conclusion

You will find yourself in numerous circumstances in your community, work, and personal lives which will call upon your communication skills and ability to speak in public. Any job interview requires you to present yourself and speak about your experience in a pressured situation. As previously stated, you are not alone if the idea or act of speaking in public is challenging to you. Political candidates and community leaders all need to earn the trust of their audience and colleagues through sharing their ideas and personalities with them.

It is critical that you have a good understanding of the complex process of communication in order to be an effective speaker. You also need to be able to read the responses of your audience and use the information you receive to inform the delivery of your presentation. Remember, communication is a dynamic process. It is never one way.

You have also learned tools to handle the “excitement” that may arise as you present. Remember to use good support as you breathe and focus on the successful outcome of your presentation. Be sure to practice and prepare for your presentations. The better prepared you are, the more successful the outcome of your presentations will be.

You can be sure that the energy you put into improving your presentation and communication skills will be of great use to you in your professional and personal lives. The need to communicate effectively with a diverse global community is as important today

as it was in ancient times. Although it may seem that the art of oration is not necessary in this day and age of digital communication it is as necessary as ever. Each of us has a unique contribution to make to our complex society. Your voice is needed to help address the critical issues facing our world today. Be sure that it is received as you want it to be, and don't let any fear of presenting in public lessen it. You have the ability to gain the tools and knowledge to make sure you are fully seen and heard in all areas of your life!

Review Questions

1. What are some ways to handle the nerves and “fight or flight” response which may begin before making a presentation in public?
2. How has the move to online communication impacted people's communication skills?
3. In addition to making an effective presentation and speaking well, what activity must the speaker engage in to engage with and maintain the interest of their audience?
4. What action from the Schramm model of the communication process was Helen Keller's teacher engaging in when she was forming sign language symbols into Helen's hands at the water pump?
5. Name five personal benefits you will gain from taking a Public Speaking course
6. What is ethnocentrism and how can a speaker avoid having an ethnocentric attitude?

Class Activities

- Give an example of the communication model and discuss all of its components in your discussion of it.
- Explain to a group of classmates how to take a deep, diaphragm supported breath.
- Describe a speech situation that would most likely have an engaged audience.

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1.3: Ethics and Public Speaking

Learning Objectives

After reading this chapter, you should be able to

- Discuss the meaning of ethics.
- Distinguish between absolute and relativist perspectives on ethics.
- Identify and apply the code of ethics for ethical public speaking established by the National Communication Association.
- Distinguish between ethical and unethical speech.

Introduction

“I regret it now because the information was wrong.”

— Colin Powell

The above quotation from former United States Secretary of State Colin Powell directly applies to the discussion we are about to have in this chapter, namely, ethics in public speaking. In a [television interview on the Larry King Live CNN program first aired in 2010 \[transcript\]](#), Powell expressed regret for a speech he delivered to the United Nations in which he provided what he believed were justifiable reasons for the United States to go to war against Iraq following the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks against the United States. Although Powell believed at the time of his speech that the information and evidence he provided in the speech were accurate, ostensibly because he trusted the officials who vetted the accuracy of the information, he later realized that the speech was based on misinformation and inaccurate evidence.

By expressing regret for delivering a speech filled with inaccuracies, Powell basically acknowledged that his speech was unethical. However, by publicly expressing regret for an unethical speech that he delivered, he fulfilled the ninth ethical principle of the National Communication Association’s code for ethical speaking, which states, “We accept responsibility for the short- and long-term consequences for our own communication and expect the same of others.” This principle calls for ethical speakers to take responsibility for mistakes and errors made in communication whether in the short or long term when they become aware of the errors and inaccuracies they expressed.

In this chapter we will explore the meaning of ethics, ethical perspectives, and the Code of Ethics of the National Communication Association, and we will distinguish between ethical and unethical speeches.

Ethics

Ethics has to do with social norms regarding right and wrong. It is a branch of philosophy that deals with right and wrong. Because different cultures have different norms about right and wrong, ethics is a very contested zone in all aspects of human encounters. One culture may consider something to be right while another may consider the same thing to be wrong. Hence, the contested nature of ethics. However, for effective communication, especially communication that is intended to move an audience to make choices or decisions, some basic agreement on what is right and wrong is necessary.

In *Institutio Oratoria* (Institutes of Oratory), the Roman rhetorician Quintilian wrote that the perfect orator is first “a good man speaking well.” This simple statement establishes a fundamental expectation for ethical public speaking, namely, that great oratory should entail both the ethical character of the speaker as well as delivery that embodies confidence, competence, dynamism, and good will (addresses the needs of an audience).

For Quintilian and other rhetoricians such as Cicero and St. Augustine, rhetoric or oratory should be grounded in truth and not deception. According to these rhetoricians, the communication of truth distinguishes ethical rhetoric from sophistic rhetoric which uses any means, including deceptive ways, untruths, and outright lies, to persuade an audience.

Ethical Perspectives

There are different perspectives on ethics, but this section will concentrate on two of them, namely, the absolute values perspective and the relativist perspective.

The absolute values perspective on ethics holds that irrespective of person, place, or time, right is right and wrong is wrong. In other words, there are universal ethical values that apply to all people and cultures. For example, it is wrong to kill or to tell a lie or

to steal or to defraud. This means that irrespective of person or culture or situation, a person who tells a lie or kills or defrauds others has done an unethical act.

Ethical relativism on the other hand is the philosophical position that the sense of right and wrong is always relative to the individual and not universal to all people and situations. The [Encyclopedia Britannica defines ethical relativism](#) as “the doctrine that there are no absolute truths in ethics and that what is morally right or wrong varies from person to person or from society to society.” The arguments for ethical relativism are mainly two-fold. According to Britannica, one argument, based on the thinking of Greek philosopher Herodotus (5th century BC), claims that every culture has its own customs and norms and no culture’s values, norms, and customs are better than those of another. A second argument in favor of ethical relativism, according to Britannica, is based on the thinking of the 18th-century philosopher David Hume, who expressed the idea that moral values are grounded in emotion and not reason and cannot, therefore, be universalized.

Implications of Ethical Perspectives for Public Speaking

When applied to public speaking, the absolute values perspective on ethics implies that there are or should be rigorous principles that guide how to teach public speaking, how to write a speech, how to deliver a speech, how to reference sources, what is considered appropriate vocal projection, eye contact, posture, vocabulary, etc. This approach to public speaking can be regarded by minority groups based on race, culture, or nationality, as oppressive in the context of culturally sustaining pedagogies and the ongoing efforts to engage pedagogies that are inclusive, diverse, and equity minded.

On the other hand, a fundamental implication of ethical relativism for public speaking is that there are no universal norms or ethical codes that govern what and how to make public presentations. This means that depending on the speaker, context, audience, or purpose, a public speaker decides what and how to present without following a predetermined style. This also means that the principle of ethical relativism is more respectful of diverse cultural values, culturally relevant speech patterns, thought processes, and language use. In the context of culturally sustaining pedagogies, the relativist ethical perspective would allow more flexibility in how public speaking is taught and how students, depending on their various backgrounds, prepare and deliver speeches.

Credo for Ethical Communication

Despite the implications of the two ethical perspectives on ethics discussed above, the National Communication Association (NCA) has established a Credo for Ethical Communication to guide the practice of the discipline.

The NCA believes ethical communication is “fundamental to responsible thinking, decision making, and the development of relationships and communities within and across contexts, cultures, channels, and media.” Conversely, the NCA believes that unethical communication threatens the well-being of individuals and society. Consequently, the NCA has established a [Credo for Ethical Communication](#).

The NCA’s Credo for Ethical Communication is extensive, but for the purpose of this chapter addressing ethics in public speaking, it is important to outline and focus on the following principles.

Nine Principles of the Credo for Ethical Communication

1. We advocate truthfulness, accuracy, honesty, and reason as essential to the integrity of communication.
2. We endorse freedom of expression, diversity of perspective, and tolerance of dissent to achieve the informed and responsible decision making fundamental to a civil society.
3. We strive to understand and respect other communicators before evaluating and responding to their messages.
4. We promote access to communication resources and opportunities as necessary to fulfill human potential and contribute to the well-being of individuals, families, communities, and society.
5. We promote communication climates of caring and mutual understanding that respect the unique needs and characteristics of individual communicators.
6. We condemn communication that degrades individuals and humanity through distortion, intimidation, coercion, and violence, and through the expression of intolerance and hatred.
7. We are committed to the courageous expression of personal convictions in pursuit of fairness and justice.
8. We advocate sharing information, opinions, and feelings when facing significant choices while also respecting privacy and confidentiality.
9. We accept responsibility for the short- and long-term consequences for our own communication and expect the same of others.

In essence, the principles outlined in the code emphasize the importance of communication that is grounded in truth, honesty, accuracy, and respect for the audience as an ethical responsibility of a speaker.

Distinguishing Between Ethical and Unethical Speeches

Based on the exploration of ethics, perspectives on ethics, and the NCA Credo for Ethical Communication, it is appropriate to observe that irrespective of cultural background or values, some general principles should guide what is ethical or unethical in public speaking.

Purpose of the Speech

Effective communication must be purpose-driven. The purpose of a speech is important because it lets the speaker and audience know the ultimate outcome of the speech. The purpose of the speech should seek to accomplish something good. If the purpose of a speech is unethical it means that it seeks to accomplish something bad. Let us explore some examples to illustrate. In the speech by former Secretary of State Colin Powell to the United Nations that we referenced in the introduction of this chapter, his purpose was to persuade the international community that Saddam Hussien, then President of Iraq, had weapons of mass destruction that posed serious security problems to the world and that the United States would have to go to war against Iraq in order to prevent the use of these weapons against the international community. The purpose of the speech was ethical in as far as it sought to protect the common good of the international community by preventing a nation and its leader from doing harm to people. On the other hand, a speech whose purpose is to arouse anger and resentment against specific groups of people, such as immigrants, would be unethical because such a speech aims to do harm to a group of people by appealing to the emotion of anger in its audience, who might then act violently or discriminate against immigrants, as evidenced by a [speech by former President Donald Trump](#) in which he called Mexicans murderers and rapists.

Credibility of Evidence

Another element of an ethical speech is that the information given should be accurate and reliable. Accurate information is based on facts and not opinion; facts can be demonstrated or proven, while opinions are the personal views of a person that may or may not be factual. The evidence should also be accurate in the sense that it should fully and properly represent the ideas or statements of others within the context in which such ideas or statements are made. Evidence that is not accurate distorts the original message of the source of information and misleads an audience. The credibility of evidence is not only about what is stated but also about who says it. To be ethical, a public speaker must verify that the source of information they use as evidence to support claims is reliable or can be trusted. For example, the statements of a racist bigot in defense of racism cannot be considered reliable because of the personal disposition of the source.

Another important consideration about the credibility of evidence is crediting the sources of the information used. An ethical speaker must let the audience know the source of the information, including data, statistics, and images such as paintings, pictures, and drawings, if the information was taken from another person's work. Failing to credit the sources of information constitutes plagiarism.

Plagiarism is using another person's ideas or work without crediting the source. There are three types of plagiarism: global, patchwork and incremental.

- Global plagiarism is taking the entire work of another person and not crediting the source. For example, if you take a speech that was written by someone else and deliver it to an audience without letting the audience know who the original writer of the speech is, that would constitute global plagiarism.
- Patchwork plagiarism on the other hand takes substantive parts, such as a paragraph, from different sources and puts them together without crediting the sources. Patchwork plagiarism is easy to commit when you highlight, copy, and paste information from different sources without crediting the sources.
- The third type of plagiarism, incremental plagiarism, happens when you take a phrase or sentence from various sources and fail to credit the sources. Ethical speakers always credit their sources.

Arrangement of Ideas

One other way to be an ethical speaker is to arrange your ideas in a way that makes it easy for the audience to follow the logical flow of the message. An ethical speaker should facilitate the understanding of the message and not confuse the audience with disorderly placement of ideas. In an orderly arrangement of ideas, the audience can easily follow how one idea moves to another or

relates to another, whereas in a confusing arrangement of ideas, the audience struggles to see how one point relates to another or flows into another.

Language

An ethical speaker should always be mindful that the language used is familiar to the audience and not too technical or abstract. Using familiar language makes it easy for the audience to understand a message being communicated, while technical or abstract language may be appropriate only for specific audiences, especially based on profession and level of education. An ethical speaker also uses inclusive language. Racist, sexist, and abusive language looks down on a group of people while extolling the perceived superiority of the speaker over the audience.

Respect for the Audience

In addition to the above guidelines for ethical speaking, a speaker should show respect to an audience by being on time to the event and respect the time allotted for the speech. The speaker also shows respect to an audience by dressing appropriately and listening to the feedback from the audience and responding to questions from the audience honestly.

Delivery

Finally, an ethical speaker should know what they are talking about, be well prepared, dress appropriately, speak clearly, engage the audience through direct eye contact and body movements that show physical/mindful presence and attention to the audience.

Other Guiding Principles for Ethical Public Speaking

Many scholars of ethical communication agree that an ethical speaker should have integrity, competence, responsibility, respect, and concern (Plante, 2004). Integrity means being an honest, fair and a just person. Competence is a quality of someone who is knowledgeable and skilled in some job or task. Responsibility has to do with keeping promises and being attentive to one's obligations. An ethical speaker should be respectful of others in terms of paying attention to their rights, needs, dignity and be concerned about the needs of others.

Conclusion

In this chapter, we explored the meaning of ethics and different perspectives on ethics, and we distinguished between ethical and unethical speeches. We also outlined the Credo for Ethical Communication by the National Communication Association and provided practical guidelines for ethical public speaking. In the context of higher education that emphasizes the need for culturally sustaining pedagogies, an ethical speaker must be respectful of diverse audiences they address. Ethical speakers should use evidence that is based on reliable facts while considering the lived experiences and needs of the audience.

Review Questions

1. What is your understanding of ethics and why is it important for public speakers?
2. Distinguish between absolute and relativist perspectives on ethics.
3. Identify nine principles of ethical communication outlined by the National Communication Association.
4. Distinguish between ethical and unethical speech.

Class Exercises

- Show a speech to the class and put students in small groups to discuss and explain why the speech is ethical or unethical.
- Put students in small groups and ask them to make a list of things they consider ethical or unethical in a speech.

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1.4: Listening

Learning Objectives

After reading this chapter, you should be able to

- Understand the importance of listening and types of listening barriers.
- Assess listening styles to improve communication outcomes.
- Recognize the speaker's role in effective listening.
- Recognize the listener's role in effective listening.

Introduction

Robyn Rihanna Fenty (a.k.a. Rihanna) launched her Fenty Beauty line in 2017. Rihanna's product filled a gaping hole in the \$430 billion beauty industry. Fenty produced 40 shades of foundations to accommodate diverse beauty enthusiasts who could not find a foundation to match their skin tone. Makeup users with darker hues were said to have had to buy multiple foundations to meet their beauty needs, which carried an exorbitant price tag. In addition, they had to blend them to achieve the proper coverage. Rihanna captured a segment of the market share because of her ability to pay attention. She listened to customers who felt left out and underrepresented.

Today, Rihanna is a billionaire primarily because of her ability to pay attention. She offers patrons an inclusive product line with a price tag slightly above drugstore brands but significantly less than what consumers pay for high-end brands. Rihanna's marketing strategy and listening acuity left many patrons overjoyed knowing there is a product created specifically for them.

Rihanna's financial success might be easily attributed to other factors, but leaders in the beauty industry acknowledge the valiant role active listening plays in its ongoing success. Active listening, as defined in the Collins online dictionary, is a two-way communication process; an active listener does not only hear, but also aims to understand, interpret, and evaluate what they hear. The insights Rihanna gained from listening to patrons in meaningful ways helped to empower makeup users and effect change in the beauty industry (West).

Listening benefits everyone. Rachel K. Sobel, who wrote for U.S. News and World Report about her experiences in medical school, had the following to say about a classmate whom she calls Jane. Jane attributes being alive to a doctor who listened well.

Jane first noticed an odd fluttering sensation inside her chest as a teenager. The doctor did a quick exam and chalked it up to palpitations from too much caffeine. Later, while in college, Jane was getting ready for bed when her heart began racing and her room suddenly started spinning. Different symptoms, different doctor, but the same cursory approach: In this case, the diagnosis was anxiety.

Not until a recent summer checkup—six years after her initial complaint—did a keen physician find what was wrong. He took a meticulous history, and then he listened to her heart with a stethoscope. Medicine's fancy term for this is auscultation—basically listening to the body's various sounds. According to Jane, this physician “wasn't just going through the motions.” He placed the stethoscope on her chest, closed his eyes, and listened for a long time. It paid off. The doc discovered a dangerous murmur, and further tests showed a 2-inch hole in the wall between two chambers of her heart. Left untreated, such a defect could have caused heart and lung failure.

The Importance of Listening



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Whether you are a student or an employee, most of your day is spent listening. One study found that college students devote 55% of their communication time to listening while executives spend 60%. Yet, it is estimated that your listening efficiency is about 25%. For example, if one of your classmates gives a ten-minute speech on the facts and fiction about the life of Anastasia Romanov, it is estimated that you will lose 75% of what you heard. This is possible because your brain processes information faster than you can speak, which gives your brain enough time to focus on something else. Researchers say your brain takes in 400 to 800 words per minute, while your speaking rate is 120 to 150 words per minute. Regardless of the challenges posed by listening, you are required to listen well at work, at home, and at play.

Hearing vs. Listening

Listening is a required job skill most people lack. Emphasis is placed on writing effective resumes, rehearsing frequently asked questions at an interview, and selecting the proper attire. But insufficient time or no time at all is spent practicing effective listening. Don't blame yourself for neglecting such an important factor. Most people neglect listening unintentionally. They assume that hearing and listening are identical. Although there is a direct relationship between the two, listening and hearing are distinctly different.

Imagine that while attending your monthly book club meeting, you noticed two new guests, Chi-Chi and Goku. You attempted to engage both attendees at the meeting to make them feel included. However, later, you noticed that Goku ignored your comments throughout the evening. At the end of the session, you approached Goku to inquire if he had a good time at the book club. He emphatically said, "Yes!" You went on to say, "I am glad to hear that because I thought you were not enjoying the session." Goku asked, "Why did you believe that?" You explained that you asked him to respond to a few questions during the meeting, but he did not answer. Goku apologized and said, "I am sorry, I did not hear you. You were sitting to my left, and I am deaf in that ear." You felt somewhat embarrassed but relieved to know Goku was listening to you but could not hear you.

Hearing is the physiological ability to perceive sounds, and listening is the mental process of paying close attention. Therefore, using your ears to interpret sounds does not denote effective listening. Effective listening requires effort and interest. It means that you must make a conscious effort to pay attention to information. Randy Carver is a financial advisor with a thriving practice outside of Cleveland, Ohio. He is also a private pilot. When Randy accidentally crashed his twin-engine Cessna plane, he suffered bodily injuries, including a cracked larynx and collapsed lungs. Upon returning to work from the hospital, he relied on a voice amplifier to conduct barely audible conversations with his clients. One of the assets of his accident, Randy noted, was his ability to learn how to listen. He began to pay attention to the client's voice, emotional cues, and nuanced speech sounds. He listened for the implicit meanings behind what they said. He became attuned to their stories and memories and empathized with their fears (Lukenberg, 2017). Learning mindful listening profited Randy in his work as a financial advisor. It allowed him to develop a deeper connection with clients.

Mindful Listening and Mindless Listening

What is mindful listening? Mindful listening shows others you value what they say. It means you give careful and thoughtful attention and responses to the message you receive. It also confirms you deem the message-sender important. The opposite is true when you listen mindlessly. Mindless listening generates automatic and routine reactions, such as "okay" and "nice," without much mental commitment. For example, Joanna had a hectic day in the office. She came home tired. As she entered the house, she asked her partner, "How did things go at work today?" They answered, "It went well, except for the fire at the train station in the morning and the announcement of another Covid-19 variant in the afternoon." Joanna continued to take her seat on the couch and responded, "Oh, that's nice! It's great to hear you had a wonderful day." Joanna's response is typical of someone who listens mindlessly. Her response makes her partner feel undervalued and disrespected.

Nevertheless, mindless listening has some value as it protects you from information overload. Mindless listening allows you to filter out the barrage of information you receive daily to protect your mental space. The key to successful listening is to decipher when to listen mindfully versus when mindless listening works favorably. Whether it's information for a test, administering the proper dosage to a patient, or just listening for fun, you must make necessary adjustments to overcome listening barriers.

Listening Barriers

Listening barriers are factors that contribute to poor listening practices. These barriers are caused by either internal or external distractions. Internal distractions occur within the listener. For example, during a classroom presentation you develop a terrible headache; now you are focused on the pain instead of listening to the speaker. External distractions occur within the environment. During the middle of your speech evaluation, piercing sounds coming from sirens drown out the speaker's voice. The noise

prevents you from clearly hearing what the speaker says, so you ask him to repeat the information. Both types of distraction interrupt the listening process.

Four Types of Internal Distractions

1. **Wandering Mind:** When your focus shifts from the subject being discussed to an unrelated topic
2. **Physical Unrest:** When you are experiencing bodily injury or discomfort that overshadows your ability to listen
3. **Mental Distress:** When you are experiencing emotional fatigue caused by lack of sleep or disturbing personal information
4. **Lack of Knowledge:** When you do not comprehend the terms or vocabulary words that the speaker is using

Two Types of External Distractions

1. **Noisy Environment:** A space that produces sound or movement that causes you to focus on what you see and hear outside of the intended situation. This is caused by voluminous traffic, uncontrolled technological sounds, or shuffling papers.
2. **Uncomfortable Space:** A space that is incongruous to the amount of occupants or that has unregulated temperatures (too hot or too cold) is not conducive for giving and receiving information.

Once you acknowledge the challenges posed by listening you can determine what level of commitment is required to improve your skills.

Listening Styles

When do you listen best? Is it when you are listening for pleasure, to lend moral support, to understand a message, or to evaluate the evidence? Your answer will vary based on your interest in the four following listening styles:

- **Appreciative Listening:** This is when you listen for your own personal enjoyment, for example, listening to your favorite CD or comedian. No one is evaluating your ability to listen. You have full autonomy to determine your listening outcome.
- **Empathic Listening:** This is when you listen to a friend or family member to provide emotional support. You function as a therapist by not telling the person what to do but allowing him to release an emotional load and relieve mental stress.
- **Comprehensive Listening:** Your goal is to comprehend the speaker. Listening to understand occurs in the classroom where you are required to recall specific details or show knowledge of the subject.
- **Evaluative Listening (or Critical Listening):** In this case you listen with intent of deciding whether or not to accept or reject the message. Your focus is on the evidence and the speaker's supporting materials.

Critical listening is a definite requirement for evaluating persuasive presentations.

Listening to Classroom Presentations

Both the speaker and the listener are responsible for effective listening. The speaker's job involves more than selecting an interesting topic and outlining the presentation. She also must spend time practicing the delivery so that she gains the listener's interest. During classroom presentations, students attribute poor listening practices to these two causes: not being able to hear the speaker, or not being able to understand what the speaker was saying. The speaker can employ various techniques to encourage the audience to pay attention.

The Speaker's Guide to Effective Listening

How does the speaker tastefully and creatively package the message to improve listening efficiency? By using four easy steps: practicing aloud, knowing your attention-getter, adapting to listener feedback, and incorporating visual aids.

1. **Practice the presentation aloud.** Do this enough times so that you can improve voice projection and familiarity with your speech sounds and patterns. If you are confident about your message, project your voice so that the audience can hear what you are saying.
2. **Rehearse your opening lines.** This will enable you to make eye contact with the audience. Poor eye contact implies that you are ignoring the audience. If you exhibit this behavior, the audience might unintentionally return the favor. They might say to themselves, *If you don't care about me, then why should I listen to you?* Eye contact not only supports your credibility, but it also gives you a chance to observe the audience's response to your message.
3. **Adapt to audience feedback.** What did you see when you looked at the audience? Did you notice signs of approval, confusion, or disinterest? Depending on your observation, adjust to that feedback accordingly. If the audience seems to have difficulty understanding you, you must think of an alternate explanation to make the idea clear and easier to retain.

4. **Include visual aids.** If visual aids are used correctly, they can clarify your ideas, reinforce your ideas, address communication barriers, and reduce attention deficit. Some listeners tune out the speaker because they either cannot hear or understand the message but will take a second chance at listening if they can see what the speaker is talking about.

The Listener's Guide to Effective Listening

The listener should apply these eight basic steps: listen ethically, listen with interest, focus on content, listen for main points, be flexible, respect the choice of free speech, control emotions, and practice listening.

1. **Listen ethically.** Be alert and polite. It's insulting to the speaker for you to fall asleep or become preoccupied with other tasks during the delivery. Sleep deprivation is not an excuse to disrespect the speaker. What if your counselor fell asleep during one of your counseling sessions? How would it make you feel?
2. **Listen with interest.** If your goal is to earn an A in your classes, you cannot declare every lecture dull, nor can you practice absenteeism. Neither situation would earn you an A. Instead, listen for usable information. Engage in a mental dialogue. Ask yourself, *What information is being shared that I can use?* Maybe it's the material that will be covered in the midterm, or perhaps the material will make you seem more intelligent to your peers.
3. **Focus on content.** Avoid being distracted by the speaker's accent, appearance, or ethnicity. Don't give in to your biases; instead give the speaker a fair chance to explain his ideas. What is your alibi for inattentive listening? Do you say you cannot understand his accent or his unenthusiastic mannerisms? It's true that there are speakers whose delivery styles challenge your listening skills, but it's still an opportunity for you to become a more effective listener. Therefore, ask yourself, *What does he know that I need to know?* Information is power, and you want to have a competitive edge, especially in today's job market. It's what you know that will make you outstanding.
4. **Listen for main ideas and other cues.** Listen for the main points instead of paying equal attention to all of the facts. Critical listeners differentiate between fact and opinion, idea and example, evidence and argument. If you focus on everything that the speaker says, you will miss the salient points. Take for instance Maria, who missed much of the review notes because she tried to write down everything the professor said. By the time she finished writing the answer for question one, the teacher had started with question three. Maria can improve her note-taking skills if she identifies the speaker's organizational patterns, transitional language, and use of recapitulation. Organizational patterns include chronological order—the sequence in which events occurred, or the steps taken to complete a process. Transitional language moves the audience from one point to the next with such phrases as, *Now that we've covered...* or *Let's look at...* Recapitulation is when you listen for the summary of main ideas.
5. **Be flexible.** Not all speakers have an identifiable organizational pattern, which makes it challenging to take notes. Therefore, be flexible in taking notes. Have more than one note-taking system you can adapt to different patterns of organization or the lack thereof.
6. **Respect the choice of free speech.** You will not always agree with the speaker's message. Ramon delivered his speech on the practices of same sex marriages, but Shu X believed such a practice is immoral. During Ramon's presentation, Shu X began to read her magazine. What should Shu X have done? Instead of behaving as if Ramon does not have a right to share his views, she should have listened courteously and decided after listening to all Ramon's arguments whether to accept or reject the message.
7. **Control your emotions.** Become a listener who first understands the message, then renders an evaluation. Sometimes as a listener you get too excited, or excited too soon, by the speaker. Listen to the message in its entirety before you accept or reject the ideas. It is more difficult to focus on the message when the speaker's points are incongruous with your thoughts. You may find that instead of listening to subsequent points, you are plotting ways to unravel the speaker's momentum, whether by asking an embarrassing question or anticipating the speaker's possible response to your challenging question.
8. **Practice listening.** It's easier to relax than it is to listen. Listening is hard work. It requires faster heart action, quicker circulation of the blood, and a small rise in body temperature. Thus, you must make a conscious effort to assume a disposition that is both helpful to you and the listener. You can establish eye contact; maintain an alert posture, and a pleasant facial expression.

Conclusion

Listening is an invaluable skill. It benefits everyone. However, it requires effort to achieve proficiency. Many people believe they are exceptional listeners, but even good listeners retain only half of what they heard. Improving your listening skills adds value to your personal and professional life. Poor listening occurs because of distractions, which cause your mind to wander. Other times,

you suffer from information overload, prejudging the speaker, or from listening too hard. You try to absorb everything the speaker is saying, causing you to miss the main message.

Taking steps to improve your listening skills begins with you placing listening as the top priority. Take listening seriously and commit to addressing your listening challenges. Avoid jumping to conclusions about the speaker, be intentional about paying attention to the message. The journey to excellent listening skills begins with you. Take those steps now.

Rate Your Listening

John says he is an excellent listener. Yet John shows up unprepared for his Sociology exam. He attended class on the day his instructor reminded the class about the upcoming exam. The instructor discussed the chapters that the exam would cover, as well as the format, and announced the amount of time allotted for taking the test. However, on the day of the exam, John blurts out, “What do you mean we are having a test? Is this a surprise?” Everyone looks at John as if he has sprouted horns on his head.

How well do you listen? If you are like John, you might rate yourself as an excellent listener, when, in fact, you are an average or poor listener. Take this listening quiz to rate your skills.

Listening Quiz

First, rate each of the statements below.

- Rate the statement 3 if you are very strong in that area.
 - Rate the statement 2 if you try and often succeed in that area.
 - Rate the statement 1 if you’re not sure how often you succeed in that area.
 - Rate the statement 0 if you never succeed in that area.
1. I am aware that to listen effectively I must listen with a purpose.
 2. I have trained myself to listen at least as twice as often as I speak.
 3. I listen for understanding rather than evaluation.
 4. I recognize the importance of my nonverbal signals to the speaker.
 5. I am aware of the words, phrases or behaviors that are likely to make me defensive.
 6. I wait until the speaker has finished before responding.
 7. I have often heard a person say to me, “Thank you for listening.”
 8. I concentrate on what the speaker is saying even though other things could distract me.
 9. I am able to exercise emotional control when listening, even if I disagree with the message.
 10. I realize that listening attentively may be the key to my success.
 11. I listen carefully to a person’s name and remember it after we’ve been introduced.
 12. I listen for ideas and feelings, as well as facts.

Next, find the total points. If you scored 12 or fewer points, you’re considered a poor listener. If you scored 13 to 20, you’re an average listener. If you scored above 20, you’re an excellent listener.

Finally, if your score suggests that you need additional listening training, then review this guide to effective listening to develop your listening efficiency.

Review Questions

1. What is the difference between hearing and listening?
2. Which of the listening styles is a requirement for evaluating persuasive presentations?
3. What role can the speaker play in encouraging the audience to listen to his presentation?
4. What are the eight techniques that the listener can employ to improve her listening skills?

Class Activities

- Think of a time when you did not listen well. Describe the situation and your listening challenges. If you had a chance to redo the scenario, what would you do differently to adjust your listening skills?
- Collaborate with your classmates to develop a listening code of conduct for your speech class. The document should be a guide for the remainder of the semester.

- Watch Julian Treasure’s TED Talk, [5 Ways to Listen Better](#). Which of his recommendations resonated with you immediately? What steps will you take to implement his recommendations? What challenges, if any, do you perceive will prevent you from trying any of his suggestions?

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1.5: Public Speaking Skills for Non-native Speakers of English

Learning Objectives

- Understand that prior knowledge is an asset.
- Recognize the value of group work.
- Differentiate between accent reduction and clarity.
- Recognize and be able to describe the benefits of outlining.
- Create and use mind maps.

“To learn a language is to have one more window from which to look at the world.” – Chinese proverb



There are many terms to refer to students whose first language is not English such as ESL (English as a second language), EFL (English as a foreign learner), EAL (English as an additional language), and ESOL (English for speakers of other languages). Some of these terms are now outdated and considered condescending, implying that students whose native language is not English are coming in with a deficit, that there is something lacking in the languages and cultures they already have. Countless studies have shown that students whose first language is not English bring a plethora of information, insight, and valuable contributions to classrooms. Rather than viewing English Learners (EL) as deficient, acknowledging their diversity and background knowledge will lead to a more inclusive and equitable learning experience for all. According to the National Center for Education Statistics, students whose first language is not English consisted of approximately 10.3 percent of public school students in 2020, that's roughly 5 million students, and that number is steadily increasing. While English Learners may not be necessarily proficient in English, that doesn't mean that they can't take and excel in a traditional public speaking class. Non-native speakers of English must fulfill the same academic requirements as any other student. While a public speaking course may seem out of reach for a non-native English speaker, an introductory speech course is actually recommended to help English learners ease into the standard college curriculum. Non-native speakers of English benefit from taking speech courses because it provides students the chance to improve their listening comprehension, fluency, as well as benefiting from the interaction with native English speakers and viewing examples of speeches made by well-versed public speakers.

Equity, Inclusion, and Diversity

A non-native speaker of English brings an abundance of culture, knowledge, and diversity to the classroom. By engaging and promoting cross-cultural knowledge, we can enhance our classrooms for all students. According to the Education Technology leader Cengage, “Non-native speakers of English enrich the traditional public speaking class by challenging other students and instructors to think about public speaking within the broader context of the many diverse voices that are increasingly a part of the American “chorus.” The EAL population is steadily increasing; as a result speech instructors need to be prepared to meet the needs of this diverse, growing population. Viewing this growth as an opportunity to promote equity, inclusion, and diversity would serve and enhance the education of all students. This chapter provides information and suggestions on how to actively engage EAL students in a public speaking classroom while meeting learning outcomes.

Culture Shock and Anxiety

Ask any student if they are excited about taking a Speech course, and the answer will probably be “No!” We know that public speaking can be a source of great anxiety to many people, even people who are native speakers of English. Non-native speakers of English may be doubly worried about public speaking. Not only are they dealing with all of the anxiety and stress that goes along with public speaking, but in addition they may also feel anxiety about their level of fluency in English and their accent. It is important to note that having an accent does not make you a ‘bad’ speaker. On the contrary, having an accent signifies that you have something that most Americans don't...a second language! That is something to be proud of. So don't strive to hide your accent, but embrace it! This may seem easier said than done, and we will go into further detail on accents later in this chapter. In the meantime, the following techniques can help you overcome communication anxiety and make the speech process easier:

- Accept that being nervous isn't a bad thing
- Know your topic well
- Do some breathing exercises
- Engage in relaxation activities/yoga
- Meditation
- Visualize your success
- Organize your material
- Practice! Practice often, and out loud.
- Reach out for support

Benefits of Group Work

As a student, you may often groan when your professor announces group work. The idea of working with others may seem inefficient or more time-consuming than working alone, and students who have had bad group-work experiences in the past may be hesitant to embrace the idea of working with classmates. However, there are countless studies that provide strong scientific support for the benefits of group work. Studies also show the benefits of group work in lessening communication anxiety. Working with peers can help students relax and give them the opportunity to freely express their feelings without the pressure of the entire class and the instructor observing them. Within small groups (approximately 2-6) students can give feedback and encourage each other. While it may be tempting to form small groups based on cultural background, this may actually hinder language progression because students may be tempted to speak in their native language. Create groups with a variety of cultural backgrounds as well as levels of fluency so that the maximum benefits can be attained. It is also helpful to assign a group leader, someone whose language skills are strong enough to guide the group through the task.

Accents and Pronunciation

BMCC Student describing her experience learning English:

I started studying English when I was 7. It's mandatory in Sweden that children learn it, and most people study it in school for 10-11 years. I decided to study an extra year, the highest level available before university, so I ended up taking English for a total of 12 years in school. When I graduated "high school", my skills in English were good, I had excellent grades and I considered myself very proficient when it came to reading and listening comprehension, oral presentation, and writing. About one year after graduation, I had gone through the process of becoming an au pair, and I arrived on American soil for the first time in August 2018. I had never spoken English daily before and was nervous about messing it up and not making myself understood, despite knowing that my English was still excellent. I practiced every day and became more comfortable talking, and my vocabulary and pronunciation became better. Still, after maybe a month or so, my jaw started to ache a lot. I couldn't figure out what was going on and why I had to try and relax my jaw once it began to ache. The more I thought about it, I realized the pain or discomfort usually came at the end of the day when I had done a lot of talking. The thought hit me that maybe it was hurting because I was speaking another language, with another rhythm, and in order to sound native, I was moving my jaw more than when speaking Swedish. Swedish is a language when we use our lips, tongue, and sometimes our throat to form sounds. I found that I had to move my jaw more when trying to sound like a native English speaker than I had ever done speaking Swedish back at home. After some time, my jaw stopped aching, even after long days of speaking, but I found it fascinating that languages require different movements and techniques.

Pronunciation refers to the ability to use the correct stress, rhythm, and intonation of a word in a spoken language. Basically it is how we make the sounds of words. In order to speak, we expel the air from our lungs and through our throats; this air then passes across our vocal chords, over the tongue, and and through the teeth and lips. The muscles in our mouths, tongue, and lips control the way we shape the flow of air. If the shape of the mouth controls airflow correctly, the words will be pronounced correctly.

Speakers whose native language is not English use different muscles of the mouth for pronunciation. According to the Oxford Languages Dictionary, an accent is "a distinctive mode of pronunciation of a language, especially one associated with a particular nation, locality, or social class." Your accent is the unique way the muscles of your mouth shape the language you speak based on your first language. Basically your accent is how you sound when you speak. I mentioned that everyone has an accent, but how is this possible? There are two types of accents: foreign and the way a group of people speak their native language. Foreign accents are a result of someone speaking one language while using the rules and sounds of another language. For example, in Spanish there is no distinction between long and short vowels. Spanish speakers tend to stretch out vowel sounds and confuse pairs of short and

long English vowels. Words like “ship” and “sheep” may be pronounced the same by a Spanish speaker because they are stretching out the vowels equally in both words. Spanish speakers also tend to add an ‘e’ sound to the beginning of words that start with a consonant. For example, instead of saying ‘school’ a Spanish speaker commonly says ‘eschool’ because they are following the rules of the Spanish language and applying it to English. By applying rules from their native language to English, ESL students may sound “foreign” to native English speakers. This is called a foreign accent.

It makes sense for foreigners to have an accent because they have a language other than English as their primary language. But how do Americans have accents? If they all speak English as their main language, how is it possible to have an accent? This is possible because people have accents based on where they were raised, where they live, and the social groups that they belong to; these are called regional dialects. Researchers identify at least five distinctive American accents with as many as twenty four dialects! It is clear that someone who is from Texas speaks very differently from someone from Boston. They are both speaking in English, yet a clear, distinctive accent is evident. Besides there being a difference in accent, which as we said is how someone pronounces a word, there are numerous dialects of English. According to the Oxford Languages Dictionary, a dialect is a particular form of a language which is peculiar to a specific region or social group. Basically, a dialect includes vocabulary and grammar along with pronunciation.

The bottom line is that English Language Learners face a lot of confusing factors beyond the basics of learning the English language. As you have learned, even native born American speakers of English have accents. Josh Katz, the author of “Speaking American: How Y’all, Youse, and You Guys Talk: A Visual Guide” says:

No matter how much media we consume, we inevitably acquire the speech patterns of the people we surround ourselves with. Our parents, our siblings, and our childhood friends have an impact that far outweighs any homogenizing effects of television, film, or the internet. The words we use will continue to reveal the contours of our cultural geography, as each ensuing generation redefines what it means to speak American (Katz 197).

Indeed language is not static, it is constantly changing. Even native speakers of English have accents. There is no such a thing as a simple American accent. English Language Learners should not be intimidated or made to feel that they are “wrong” because they have an accent.

Accent Modification

“Do you know what a foreign accent is? It’s a sign of bravery.”— Amy Chu

In recent years there has been growing controversy over the rise in accent reduction or accent modification services offered to ESL students. According to the American Speech-Language Hearing Association (ASHA), accent modification is a service that individuals seek to decrease or modify their accent. It involves pronunciation training that modifies speech patterns. The service is controversial because many non-native English speakers try to reduce their foreign accent to sound more “American,” which can be seen as devaluing their own language and culture. The term “accent reduction” implies that there is something wrong with a foreign accent. Opponents of accent reduction training argue that rather than reducing or eliminating an accent, English Language Learners should aim for clarity in their pronunciation. As long as the speaker is clear and understandable, accent reduction training is unnecessary. Most English Language Learners have the goal of reducing their accent in order to be understood easily. Rather than feel that their accent is “wrong”, EAL students should aim for clarity in their speech.

Communicating with Clarity

¿Qué?	뭐라고요	ماذا
什么	What?	co?
hvað?	какне?	Ano?

Good communicators don’t just read the words of a speech, they care that the audience understands their message. Clear communication skills are a goal that all public speakers should have, not just Non-Native Speakers of English. Clarity is important because a speaker wants the audience to relate to what they are

saying; a speaker wants their message to not only be heard, but understood. Communicating with clarity also shows respect to your audience. The following tips will be useful to all public speakers to ensure clarity:

- Know what it is you are trying to say before you say it. In other words, think before you speak. Consider what your topic is and ask yourself what is the information that you are actually trying to convey to your audience. Once you know what it is that you would like to get across, then you can choose appropriate vocabulary to help you communicate your message.
- Use simple language. Don't use large, unfamiliar words when simple words will do. While you may be trying to impress your audience with your large vocabulary, pronouncing unfamiliar words incorrectly may hurt your credibility as well as distract your audience.
- Speak slowly. Often speakers speak at a very fast rate because they are nervous and just want to get the experience over with; the result is an unintelligible speech. By slowing your rate of speaking, you give yourself time to pronounce sounds accurately and you also give your audience a chance to comprehend and reflect on what you've said.
- Global connections. Reach out to your audience by sharing a personal story or anecdote. Not only do studies show that audiences relate better to presenters who share stories or personal information, but they help connect us. Take advantage of the fact that you are in a diverse environment and use the opportunity to expand your audience's horizons. In turn, you will learn a lot from diverse speakers as well.
- Practice, Practice, and then Practice again! There is nothing worse for an audience member than listening to a speech when it is the first time the speaker has delivered it! Practice ahead of time, identify the words that you have difficulty pronouncing and listen to the dictionary pronunciation of them. This is a time when having a group for support is beneficial because group members can listen to you practicing and help you correct unclear pronunciation. It may also be helpful to record yourself practicing and watch the recording.
- Use Presentation Aids. Good presentation aids can help you get your message across and visually engage your audience. Studies show people remember more when presented information both visually and verbally. Presentation aids are particularly helpful to EAL students because they can help them remember key vocabulary words.

Test Yourself – Review of Communicating with Clarity:

Outlining

Imagine that you wanted to build a house. You have a beautiful piece of land and decide that you are knowledgeable enough to build your dream home yourself. Do you go to the hardware store, buy some wood and nails and start building? Or do you first plan how the house will look? How many rooms will it have? How large will it be? Based on these answers you probably would draw or design a layout of the house; this is called a blueprint. Just as no builder ever starts buying materials and throwing them together without a blueprint, writers should also have a layout or a plan for what should be included in their speech. We call this an outline.

Outlining is an important tool for both writers and public speakers. Outlining allows you to visually look at your information and decide what to put in, what to keep out, allows you to see if you are being repetitive, or if you are missing an important point. It may seem like an unnecessary step when you want to just start typing away, but in reality, taking the time to outline will save you a lot of time overall. Just as a builder organizes their materials and sees if things fit well together, an outline helps writers and speakers organize their thoughts and visually see them on paper without the hassle of having to write out complete sentences or paragraphs. Outlines are great because short phrases are sufficient for seeing if ideas actually connect and if the overall information included relates back to your topic or thesis.

English Language Learners may have a difficult time with the idea of outlining because in many cultures, discourse patterns are not linear, which means that structuring may be difficult for EAL students that come from these cultures. As educator Tan Huynh states, "Many of my Asian students come from schools who practice a traditional approach to learning English that focuses on learning grammar rules. They were not asked to create language – just to memorize it." This approach, while successful in teaching grammar rules, does not help students with creating oral communication. Outlining helps students produce language because they are free from the pressures of having to organize their thoughts while worrying about the mechanics of language.

Mind Mapping

One way to make the outlining process easier for non-native speakers of English is through the use of mind maps. Mind maps are a tool that can be used to brainstorm ideas and start building an outline. Mind mapping is a visual exercise that allows you to graphically organize your ideas. The basic idea behind a mind map is that there is a central, main idea. From that central idea, you start "branching" out and jotting down whatever ideas you think connect to this central idea. Think of mind mapping as visual note-

taking, all mind maps have a natural hierarchical structure that radiates from the center and uses lines, symbols, words, phrases, and color to actually “map out” what ideas and thoughts you may have. When you are finished, you will have a colorful and probably messy diagram that you can examine and use to determine which parts of your map actually do relate to your central topic, what are the most important points to include and what order will you include them in? Mind mapping is a creative way to generate key points and can lead to a free flow of ideas. Because it is unstructured, it can be a very valuable tool for non-native speakers of English.

There are many online programs that students can now use to create mind maps digitally. View the sample mind map below:

Mind Map

Mind Mapping Basic Steps:

1. Choose a general topic.
2. Place that main topic in the center and draw lines or “branches” from the central topic. Draw as many branches as needed and jot down whatever words or phrases come to mind. Don’t worry about spelling or grammar! The point is to brainstorm and get down whatever thoughts come to mind.
3. Then create sub-branches that extend from the main branches to further develop your ideas.
4. Feel free to even draw pictures and use colors to help you organize your ideas.
5. Your finished map can then be used to see if your ideas actually relate back to the main topic and can help you decide which subpoints you would like to include in your speech.

Outlining may seem like a tedious, unnecessary task for many students. For non-native speakers of English, it may actually be difficult for language structuring reasons. Mind mapping is a useful tool that allows students to creatively brainstorm their topics and make connections without being hindered with grammar and other language mechanics at the start of the process. Mind mapping offers an excellent starting point for reviewing and regrouping key ideas.

Conclusion

Taking a public speaking class is a daunting experience for any student. Most people simply do not like the idea of giving speeches in front of an audience. If you are a native speaker of English listening to a non-native speaker of English give a speech, place yourself in their shoes. Imagine how difficult it must be for your classmate to not only face the challenge of public speaking but to do so in a new, unfamiliar language. Be patient as you listen and if you don’t understand something that is said, politely ask for clarification. Look at the situation as an opportunity to learn from your classmate as you are exposed to diverse speakers.

If you are a non-native speaker of English then take comfort in the fact that even native speakers get nervous about public speaking. Having communication anxiety is something that many people experience regardless of language proficiency. Use the Public Speaking classroom as an opportunity to expand your English language skills. You can benefit greatly from watching your classmates present, researching and outlining your own material, practicing speaking and listening skills with group members, and exposing yourself to diverse viewpoints in a multicultural classroom.

The goals of public speaking classrooms are to help all students enhance and improve their communication skills. By empowering our voices we can transform and deliver high impact presentations that will allow our messages to be heard beyond the classroom.



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Student Voices

Tanzil Fatima, a community and human health and biology major and an international student from Pakistan, studied at UWC Pearson College in Canada. It wasn’t until she arrived at OU that she said she started feeling conscious of her accent:

“The first two weeks were a roller coaster,” Fatima said. “Every time it would be a lot of different things about me — my skin color or the country that I come from, my accent or just a variety of different things. People were like, ‘Oh, where are you from? You have a unique accent,’ (and) I’m like, ‘Okay, I don’t know what that means.’” Patterns emerged in people’s comments

regarding Fatima's accent, including phrases like "you speak English very well." She said she became aware of the different connotations it had — from someone being genuinely interested in her to simply being microaggressive. "For some people, (it) is just a compliment, for (others, it is) like, 'Oh you speak English well for the race you come from, or for the country you come from, or you speak well compared to other people who look like you'," Fatima said. "So, it depends if it's a microaggression or not, and I feel like this is one of the biggest indicators of discrimination in language."

(<https://www.oudaily.com/news/the-acc...b129bb178.html>)

A BMCC student:

I came to the United States in the Summer of 2006. I was only 6 years old at the time. All I remember was saying goodbye to my family members in Mexico, I was crying in confusion. When I arrived here in the United States, I was really confused, it was like I was on a totally different planet. I went from having a wide-open space to being in an apartment. And I couldn't understand anything except my mother, who spoke Spanish. When September came, my mom had already registered to the elementary school P.S 169. I was so nervous because I didn't know anyone and didn't speak their language. My first day of first grade was frightening. I was nervous but I didn't cry the first day. I went to school for about a week. That first week was a nightmare, I had no idea what was happening. I couldn't keep up with my work. I had no friends and would be made fun of. I would cry every day, begging my mom to take me home. One of my ESL teachers, who took me out for small group work, saw the amount of stress everything was causing me. My ESL teacher with other school administrators suggested that my mother, putting me back in kindergarten. They told her that it would be the best choice for me since it was still the beginning of the school year, and it would have helped me pick up the language easily and faster. Now I realized it was the best decision, but back then I hated it, I would cry every day because I was sent back to kindergarten, I was the tallest girl there, the kids made fun of me. And I felt like everyone thought I was dumb. The teacher was really nice and made sure I was ok. That helped me so much. I started learning new songs, phonics and learned to read, and slowly started to learn and understand. And I had ESL up until the 3rd grade. My English is not perfect, but I can't thank my mother enough for how grateful I am to be here. And see the number of opportunities I have speaking, writing, and understanding two languages. This is also a reason I want to be a Bilingual Childhood Education Teacher, to help those kids who are learning English as their second language and be able to teach in my primary language.

Key Takeaways

1. Prior knowledge is an asset and helps create a multicultural learning environment.
2. Group work is beneficial to EAL students by boosting confidence and helping students practice language skills.
3. Communicating with clarity should be a goal for all public speakers.
4. Outlining offers students many benefits in speech preparation. Mind maps are a great way to start an outline.

Class Activities

- Choose a topic and create a mind map.
- Write an outline for your topic.
- Work with a small group and discuss how you may have been misunderstood due to your accent. Or have you ever misunderstood someone else's accent?

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1.6: Persuasion Across Cultures

Learning Objectives

After reading this chapter, you should be able to

- Explain the causes of cross-cultural miscommunication.
- Identify fundamental cross-cultural communication strategies.
- Practice cross-cultural dialogue.

Introduction



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Speaking English as a lingua franca refers to the global phenomenon of people who use English as a common language when they do not comprehend each other's native languages. Despite their limited skills, users of English as a lingua franca manage to overcome considerable linguistic and cultural communication barriers by focusing on meaning and purpose. The fact that users of English as a lingua franca can communicate effectively, gain trust, maintain respect, and avoid conflict speaks volumes about the ingenuity of human communication skills.

The use of English as a lingua franca is one consequence of globalization, which Swedish journalist Thomas Larsson has defined as “the process of world shrinkage, of distances getting shorter, things moving closer. It pertains to the increasing ease with which somebody on one side of the world can interact, to mutual benefit, with somebody on the other side of the world” (9). Enhanced by the revolutionary advances in communication technologies, globalization has facilitated direct contact among people from various countries, cultural, and linguistic backgrounds. Face-to-face or technology-mediated, cross-cultural encounters are typically friendly, respectful, and positive despite cultural and linguistic barriers and differences. This chapter will explore the nature and causes of cross-cultural miscommunication and identify key strategies for effective cross-cultural persuasion.

Check Yourself

The Root of Cross-Cultural Miscommunication

When people from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds meet, the interaction is usually friendly and respectful. In cross-cultural communication, people are typically proud of their acceptance and tolerance and emphasize shared values with different people. Many people dream of traveling to foreign countries to learn about other nations, cultures, traditions, and religions. Unfortunately, misunderstandings and conflicts may occur when people from differing linguistic and cultural worldviews argue about controversial political or social issues.

While respect and tolerance can go a long way in reducing conflict among people from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds, misunderstandings can still result in severe disagreements and conflicts due to differences in worldviews and communication styles. Personal, social, and cultural factors usually shape a person's communication style. However, how individuals express themselves reflects their socio-economic status and the influence and power in society. For instance, people who belong to a dominant or privileged group tend to speak in a way that reflects their influential status. Privileged individuals in some societies may project their dominant position over less privileged groups or individuals by using direct, assertive, and goal-oriented language. On the other hand, individuals with less power may reflect their lack of influence by using indirect or implicit expressions.

Despite sharing universally accepted values such as harmony, trust, sincerity, honesty, and loyalty among world cultures, traditions, and religions, cross-cultural communication can still be distrustful and tense due to differences in values, beliefs, and worldviews.

Gender roles are perceived differently in different cultures and religions and are usually controversial. For example, in many cultures, men are protective of women and show respect by preventing or shielding them from working or doing demanding jobs. In contrast, barring women from work or doing challenging jobs is viewed as violating gender equality and fundamental workplace rights in other cultures. Thus, the different perceptions of gender roles may lead to miscommunication and serious misunderstandings in cross-cultural settings.

Miscommunication between people from different linguistic or cultural backgrounds may result from differences in values, beliefs, or communication styles. For example, people in some cultures emphasize direct and explicit communication to express individualism, independence, and pride. Furthermore, the straightforward communication style is viewed positively in Western cultures as an honest and practical approach to personal and professional interactions.

Cross-Cultural Persuasion Strategies

Persuasion involves influencing others to do or believe something by presenting convincing reasons or evidence. Robert B. Cialdini has identified six persuasion techniques that can help speakers win hearts and minds. The six techniques can be used in different combinations and include persuading listeners to like and trust the speaker as someone who has something valuable to offer. To like you, your listeners have to feel appreciated and respected by you, and to trust you; they need to trust your knowledge or expertise and trust your commitment to your ideas. Effective cross-cultural communication should be based on effective persuasion techniques and the strategies specific to communication in diverse linguistic and cultural settings. The following are fundamental cross-cultural communication strategies.

Emphasizing Shared Values

The first cross-cultural persuasion strategy is to build rapport and establish by emphasizing your values with your audience from a different linguistic or cultural background. New York City is an excellent example of how millions of people from all corners of the globe overcome countless linguistic and cultural barriers. New Yorkers live, work, and prosper in their diverse communities by championing such values as freedom, equality, and justice, which serve as a solid foundation for communication and persuasion.

A practical example of building rapport by emphasizing shared values is loyalty to family and community to a listener who grew up in Saudi Arabian society. Saad Said A. Al-Zahrani and Stan A. Kaplowitz explored the differences between Americans and Saudis and concluded that Saudis are more collectivist than Americans. People from collectivist cultures tend to be more family- and group-serving than people from individualist cultures, who tend to be more self-serving. By sharing one's loyalty and love for family, people from a collectivist culture like the Saudis and others from individualist cultures like Americans establish a solid ground for persuasion.

Check Yourself

Focusing on Meaning and Intention

Focus on meaning and intention is critical since it helps reduce or eliminate minor distractions, common in cross-cultural communication and persuasion. For instance, people in some cultures express themselves indirectly and implicitly to maintain harmony and show courtesy, whereas people in other cultures express themselves directly and explicitly to show honesty and trustworthiness. Consequently, it is not uncommon for two people from the above-mentioned cultures to misunderstand each other, as direct and explicit speakers may appear bold and disrespectful, while indirect and implicit speakers may seem elusive or non-committal. Recognizing the difference between implicit and explicit communication styles reduces the chance of misunderstanding and conflict.

Speakers from individualist cultures may appear to listeners from collectivist cultures as self-centered and self-important. Conversely, speakers from collectivist cultures may appear to listeners from individualistic cultures as selfless and lacking in self-esteem. But, of course, both impressions can be completely wrong since communication styles reflect social norms, power structures, and relationships rather than individual traits. Therefore, distinguishing between personal qualities and cultural styles of communication is crucial for establishing and maintaining rapport and avoiding conflict.

Persuasion requires understanding what the person you are speaking with says and means. While this might be straightforward in a language and tradition you are familiar with, it is trickier when engaging in cross-cultural persuasion. For example, many Japanese prefer to show disagreement indirectly while many Americans do so directly. Therefore, it is common for the Japanese to perceive Americans as aggressive or discourteous. Conversely, Americans may perceive the Japanese as elusive, indecisive, or weak. Both perceptions can be completely mistaken, backfire, and undermine "trust and developing relationships" (Rahman 11).

Photo by [Nick Fewings](#) on [Unsplash](#)

Global and social media can intensify cultural and political tensions, contribute to miscommunication, and divide communities. Cross-cultural communication can be particularly fraught with miscommunication challenges due to the linguistic and cultural barriers that separate people from different backgrounds. Therefore, applying empathetic listening and suspending judgment are critical strategies for effective communication and persuasion. Furthermore, eliminating or reducing misunderstandings and tension necessitates approaching cross-cultural communication with open-mindedness and willingness to compromise and find solutions to problems (Putnam and Roloff).

Understanding other people's cultural context and perspective are critical for decreasing conflict and improving persuasiveness. For example, while some cultures adhere to strict rationality as a persuasive strategy, others may view strict adherence to logic as attempts to dictate and impose opinions and solutions without fully understanding the discussion's political, social, or cultural context. On the other hand, appealing to emotion, which is common in some cultures, can be interpreted as avoiding facts or ignoring logic and reason. Empathetic listening requires showing others your genuine interest in understanding their ideas. One way to show empathy is by paraphrasing speakers' viewpoints in your own words, asking for clarification, or expressing appreciation of their contribution to the discussion.

Approaching Persuasion as Dialogue

In this era of globalization, ethnic, cultural, and religious diversity has become the norm in the United States and across the globe. The emerging global, pluralistic culture, in which people from different backgrounds work and live together, will shape how people perceive themselves, others, and reality. In such a pluralistic environment, cross-cultural communication requires dialogue with others "to understand one another's point of view, to show tolerance, listening, and flexibility of thought in the face of sociocultural gaps" (Eliyahu-Levi 417).

Linguistic and cultural barriers can be decreased or eliminated if communication is focused on meaning and purpose. For example, millions of people use English as a foreign language (EFL) to communicate effectively without necessarily adopting the cultural values, beliefs, or styles of native speakers of English. Adopting dialogue helps maintain a positive tone when speaking with people with different communication styles and cultural etiquette. Thus, it is essential to remember that when communicating with EFL speakers, the latter may not observe the values, opinions, or communication strategies used by native English speakers. Furthermore, it is essential to remember that when engaging in persuasive dialogue with people from different linguistic or cultural backgrounds than yours, the latter filter the ideas through the lens of their communication patterns and social and political experiences. Therefore, suspending judgment and listening carefully to the arguments and evidence help achieve mutual understanding, reach an agreement, and resolve conflicts.

Approaching cross-cultural persuasion as a two-way dialogue helps build trust and reduce disagreements and tension. Dialogue requires participants to listen carefully, be flexible, and give up trying to control the communication process to achieve predetermined outcomes. Michael L. Kent and Maureen Taylor view dialogue as a means to solidify sympathy, satisfaction, and trust, essential for relationship building between people who would otherwise find no grounds for reasoning and agreement. Hence, cross-cultural communication is essentially a compromise between people committed to searching for ways to engage and remain in constant dialogue that may seem impossible at times.

In many Western cultures, monologue is hailed as a winning method of speech to persuade and change hearts and minds. However, in cross-cultural communication, monologues may be counterproductive. It should, therefore, be replaced by dialogue which is a balanced two-way symmetrical communication process that leads to mutual understanding between participants (Grunig et al.).

Conclusion

Building linguistic and cultural bridges are fundamental strategies for effective cross-cultural persuasion. Engaging in genuine dialogue for understanding and being understood is the basis for building trust, reducing tension, and reaching an agreement.

Review Questions

- What are the root causes of cross-cultural communication?
- What are the key strategies for successful cross-cultural persuasion?
- Why is dialogue essential as a basis for cross-cultural persuasion?

Class Activities

- In small groups, share with your classmates some of the communication style(s) people in your culture or community use to persuade others.
- Work with a partner on two short debates about a sensitive social or political issue: The first exemplifies asymmetrical and the second an asymmetrical dialogue.

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1.7: Presentation Aids

Learning Objectives

- List and explain reasons why presentation aids are important in public speaking.
- Select the appropriate type of presentation aid that most effectively supports the speech.
- Maximize the benefits and recognize the pitfalls of using popular presentation aids such as PowerPoint.
- Exercise restraint when choosing content and design features for visual aids.
- Display slides and other visual aids effectively and at the right time.
- Evaluate how and when to use presentation aids for online presentations.
- Critique and identify how to improve the quality and appeal of visual aids.

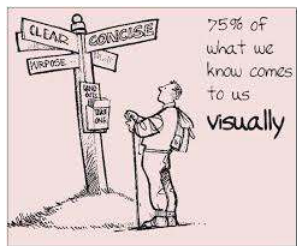
“What I hear, I forget; What I see, I remember; What I do, I understand.”

–Old Chinese proverb, sometimes attributed to Confucius



I remember in my first semester teaching Public Speaking, I assigned the Informative Speech. One of the requirements for the speech was to have a presentation aid. Now, most of the students opt to do a PowerPoint presentation as their visual aid. One in particular stood out to me. The student had their entire speech written out on the slides and proceeded to read each slide to us word-for-word! Obviously that student thought that they were killing two birds with one stone, writing their speech and having a presentation aid. However, if you have ever been read to, you know that there is nothing more boring for an audience member. It was after this experience that I learned I needed to be more clear and spend more time explaining what good presentation aids were and how to use them effectively.

Presentation aids are tools that help speakers effectively deliver their message while engaging the audience. The steps that a speaker takes to prepare a speech are detailed and culminate in the goal of delivering an effective speech. Speakers often spend time carefully considering possible topics, then researching the topic, drafting an outline, preparing a speech and finally practicing the delivery of that speech. You may wonder why it would be necessary to take the extra step of using a presentation aid; if a speaker has adequately researched, prepared, and practiced their speech, wouldn't that be enough? The fact is that even impressive presentation aids won't enhance a poor speech; presentation aids can only enhance a well-crafted speech. The final step that can make a speech even more effective is having some type of presentation aid to go along with the speech.



Benefits of Presentation Aids

People remember more information when it is presented both visually and verbally. According to psychologist Richard Mayer, “The Multimedia Principle states that humans learn best from words and pictures rather than just words alone.” This principle is the foundation of all Mayer’s principles, that images and words are more effective than words alone. Studies show that people recall approximately 10-20 percent of information given three days after a spoken lecture. That number increases dramatically to 65 percent when visuals are used.

Presentation aids help to gain the audience’s attention and keep them interested in what the speaker is saying. If you are a speaker who is apprehensive or nervous about public speaking, utilizing presentation aids can help take some of the pressure off of you and focus the audience’s attention on the aids themselves. Presentation aids are also beneficial because they enhance clarity and

therefore comprehension. Your audience will not only be engaged by good visual aids, but having them will clarify their understanding of the information given. Additionally, presentation aids increase efficiency. As the famous saying goes, “A picture is worth a thousand words.” While presentation aids may not necessarily be pictures or even visual in nature, the idea remains that using some type of presentation aid will help a speaker effectively and efficiently relay their message.

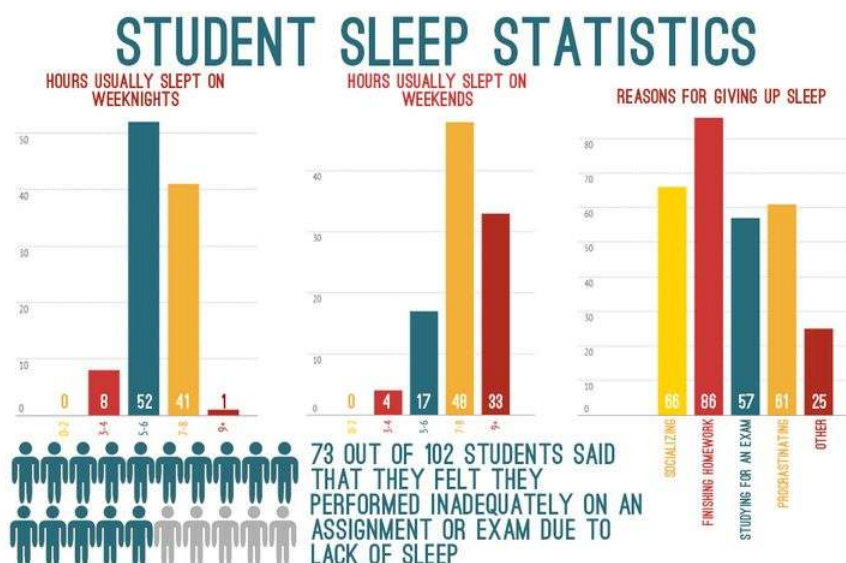
It is extremely important to keep in mind the fact that presentation aids are just that: aids. They are used to help the speaker deliver an effective speech. They are not the main focus and should not stand alone. It is your job as speaker to use them effectively and to communicate to your audience what they are and the message that you are trying to send. Presentation aids should not distract or confuse the audience; simplifying your presentation aids is a good tip to keep in mind – less is more. Exercise restraint when using PowerPoint or other slides, don’t play audio/video clips for too long, and don’t put charts and graphs up and leave it to the audience to figure out what is being represented. Keep in mind that your goal is to deliver clear information to the audience; distracting them by elaborate, complicated aids will interfere with that. Above all, carefully evaluate your speech topic and determine which type of presentation aid will most efficiently help you communicate your message; let’s take a look at the variety of types now.

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Types of Presentation Aids

Good presentation aids appeal to the five senses: sight, sound, taste, touch, and smell. The most common type of presentation aid that speakers use are **visual aids**, ones that the audience can see. Things like pictures, diagrams, charts, graphs, and maps are types of visual aids. These visual aids can be in a physical format or electronic. **Audio aids** are another type of presentation aid. They include audio clips, music clips, speech samples, and sound effects. A presentation aid that appeals to the sense of taste would be food; while ones that appeal to the sense of smell may be the scent of a perfume or fragrance. Presentation aids may also be objects that are three-dimensional or ones that change over the course of a demonstration speech. The variety of aids available are numerous and the best way to decide which type of presentation aid to use is to evaluate your speech topic and ask yourself which type of aid will actually enhance your speech.

For example, if you are doing an informative speech, and your topic is “the importance of sleep,” begin by asking yourself: what is the best presentation aid I can use to help deliver my ideas to the audience? You obviously can’t bring in an actual sleeping person to demonstrate what a good sleep looks like! Similarly, videos or audio recordings of such a thing wouldn’t be very effective. You consider the options, evaluate their value and ease of use, and decide to show bar graphs of sleep statistics to illustrate how important sleep is.



Let’s take a look at the variety of presentation aids you may choose to use:

Physical Objects and Props

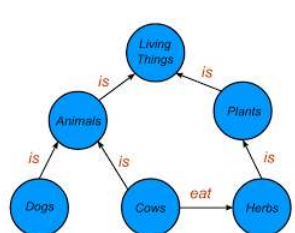
Items like physical objects and props can allow your audience to see exactly what you are talking about. In his famous TED Talk on “Mosquitos, Malaria, and Education,” Bill Gates did something that shocked the audience. He released mosquitoes from a jar. In

doing this, he wanted the audience to experience what millions of people experience in the developing world. This prop gave the audience the opportunity to view something that may not be easily explainable verbally or even through a picture.

<https://ed.ted.com/lessons/mosquitos-malaria-and-education-bill-gates>

Using an object or a prop will help your audience understand your meaning and connect with you, the speaker. When using a prop, carefully consider when to display it and whether or not it should be passed around. Passing the object around may be distracting to your audience and therefore may distract you, so using your judgement based on the size of the audience and the type of object is important.

Charts, Graphs, Diagrams, Maps

	
Example of a diagram	Example of a variety of charts: bar, graph, line, pie

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Conceptual_Diagram_-_Example.svg

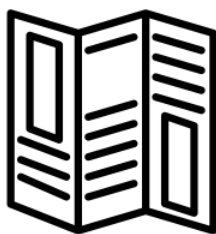
If your audience is relatively small then using physical, not electronic, charts, graphs, diagrams, and maps may be a good option. Prior to social distancing regulations it was common for team members or small groups to gather in conference rooms for presentations. In such a closed setting, physical charts, graphs, diagrams, and maps are effective in allowing the audience to collaborate with the speaker. Charts, graphs, and diagrams should always be related to what you are presenting. When using them, stand to the side of your aids while facing the audience.



Audio and Video

Depending on your speech topic, audio and video aids may be the best choice for a presentation aid. Audio and video aids are also wonderful due to the fact that people with disabilities can follow your presentation much more effectively with the use of these types of aids. With the use of visual aids, audience members who experience deafness or are hard of hearing can follow your visual aids, be sure to enable captioning for your videos ahead of time. People who experience blindness or vision impairment will be able to appreciate audio aids that complement your presentation.

It's important to remember that the presentation aid is just that: an aid. It should not be the main focus of your presentation. You, the speaker, are the main focus. Don't play a video or an audio clip for the majority of your presentation time, instead play short clips that highlight your main points. If you are giving a 5 to 7 minute speech, your presentation aid should at the most be 60 seconds long. Be sure to have the video or audio clip ready to play and if there happen to be any technical difficulties, be prepared to continue without your aid. Spending time trying to get the technology to work is distracting and a waste of time.



Handouts

Handouts are excellent presentation aids because they allow the audience to take a part of your speech home with them after you have finished the speech. Having something to refer back to can be extremely beneficial for helping audience members retain the information presented. The issue with handouts is determining the best time to hand them out. If you do it at the beginning of your speech, the audience may be so focused on reading the handout, that they don't pay attention to the speaker who is giving the speech. If you pass them out during the speech, that may interrupt your flow in delivery and distract you. And if you pass the handout at the end, the audience may be missing relevant information to stay engaged in your presentation. There is no recommended or perfect time in which to pass handouts out. The suggestion is to use your judgement on a case-by-case basis. Perhaps handing out the handouts at the beginning and giving the audience a few minutes to digest the information before beginning your speech would be suitable. When designing a handout, pay attention to style and font choices. Choose options that are easy to read for all audience members, including those who experience low vision. Make sure to bring enough copies of the handout for the entire audience.

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Demonstrations

This is discussed in much more detail in the chapter on Demonstration Speeches. Certain topics work best when the speaker demonstrates how to do something; rather than just tell the audience how to do something, the speaker actually shows them. For example, if you wanted to explain how to cook a certain recipe, it would be beneficial to show the audience the steps involved. It is important to have all of your demonstration items/props ready and to have adequately practiced using them. In the event that something doesn't work or go according to plan, be prepared to continue with your speech.

Digital Slides

The most common type of presentation aid used is some digital version of slideware. Software by PowerPoint, Prezi, Google Slides, and Keynote are probably the most popular methods for creating digital slides. These tools are excellent ways to enhance your presentation and help your audience comprehend your main points beyond simply delivering your message verbally. However, it is important to use these digital aids correctly.

First of all, it is important not to overload each slide with too much information. Too much information or items to examine on a slide is distracting. As a speaker, you want to stay connected with your audience; if your audience is too busy reading everything you have up on slides, they will lose that connection with you. Putting too much information on a slide is also counterproductive because you are signaling to the audience that everything is equally important. You should be using your slides to highlight the important parts of your message.

Second, adding too much text to your slides also puts you in danger of simply reading to your audience. Reading to your audience puts the speaker at risk for losing the connection with the audience. Due to direct reading, your vocal quality will likely suffer and you will sound monotonous and thus boring to your audience. Besides which, reading to your audience signals that you aren't adequately prepared which will hurt your credibility.

Furthermore, it is important to keep in mind that your slides should not 'steal the show.' You are the main focus, not your presentation aid. Due to the overwhelming number of options that digital slideware offers – options to display text, images, charts, graphs, and even to play audio and video files – presenters can become sidelined by their own presentation aid! Prezi in particular offers multiple animations and transitions; limit these so that it doesn't become too distracting. Don't let your presentation aid 'steal the spotlight' from you, make sure that you are in control of your presentation aid.

Aim to be inclusive when designing your slides. Choose appropriate colors for your slides to ensure that everyone in the audience will be able to see them. Avoid clashing or contrasting colors so that audience members with vision impairments are also able to see your slides. Similarly font style/size is also important, don't be tempted to choose fancy and thus possibly illegible fonts.

Choose font sizes that everyone in the audience will be able to see and read. Microsoft offers this guide to help design accessible slides in PowerPoint:

<https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/office/make-your-powerpoint-presentations-accessible-to-people-with-disabilities-6f7772b2-2f33-4bd2-8ca7-dae3b2b3ef25>

Once you have designed appropriate slides that actually enhance your message, take adequate time to practice delivering your speech while flipping through your slides. Knowing when to display a slide in relation to what you are saying is important. When you are finished with the slide, take it away so that the audience's focus goes back to you, the speaker.

Also, always be prepared for the fact that technology fails – the slides may not load, you may have password restrictions, you might lose the USB that your presentation aid is saved on, any multitude of issues may arise; being prepared and ready to continue without your presentation aid is crucial.

People as Presentation Aids

The speaker is the first thing the audience sees. In a way, you are the first presentation aid that is being presented to the audience. Dressing appropriately/professionally lends to your credibility. Also, being prepared before beginning your speech signals to the audience that you are confident and ready to deliver the speech; have your notes and presentation aids available. If you are using your own body to demonstrate how to do a dance step or how to apply makeup, for example, then practicing ahead of time is key. If you are using another person to help you demonstrate something, then be clear to the person beforehand what is involved, especially if your demonstration necessitates touching another person.

Your credibility also comes into play during the question and answer period of a speech. You have the opportunity to call on audience members; be sure to include as many people as time will allow, and always repeat the person's question so that the entire audience can hear it.

Using Presentation Aids Online

When delivering a speech in person, you will have the opportunity to evaluate your topic and decide which type of presentation aid will best meet your needs. Presenting a speech online may limit you in some ways, however, again carefully considering your topic and evaluating the type of aid to use is important.

When presenting slides online, you will have the option to turn your camera off and have the focus be the slides, or to keep the camera on and be minimized in the corner of the screen. It is recommended that you do not turn your camera off, because again, you are the main focus, you are the speaker, and your presentation aids should not take center stage. Aim to remain visible to your audience for the entire presentation. When you are finished with the slides, take them down and maximize the audience's view of yourself.

It is also recommended that you begin your speech without the slides, give the audience your introduction, and then share your screen with them. Keep in mind that you are the speaker and should be the audience's main focus. In order to be engaged with what you are saying, the audience needs to connect with you, the speaker; they can't do that if they don't see you and are looking at slides. As with any presentation, ample practice will be key to your success. Practicing your speech while maximizing and minimizing your slides will help you smoothly deliver your speech without any interruptions.

Conclusion

At the beginning of the chapter, I mentioned my experience many years ago with students using ineffectual presentation aids. The student who wrote their speech out word-for-word and displayed it on slide after slide made a poor choice in this presentation aid for many reasons. Mainly, too much text on a slide is either overwhelming for the audience, or they do end up reading it and don't focus on the speaker. In this case, the audience was bored by being read to.

To summarize, presentation aids are extremely effective ways to engage your audience and highlight key points from your speech. Carefully consider your topic and ask yourself which type of presentation aid will best allow you to represent your topic and main points. Evaluate the types of presentation aids that you have at your disposal, consider the size/needs of your audience, the ease of use of the actual aid, and then determine which type of aid will best help you relay your message effectively. Keep in mind that your aid is just a helper and not the main focus of the speech. You are!

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Class Activities

- Give students a list of speech topics and have them discuss/decide which type of presentation aid would be most effective.
- Show students the following slide and have them identify what is wrong with it and how it can be improved:

WHAT MAKES SLIDES GOOD?

- **They don't have questions for headings**
- **They present ideas or information that is best absorbed visually**
 - Maps / Graphs / Photos / Charts
- **They do not have vary many words on them**
- **They do have a lot of words, but only because those are important words that you want the audience to carefully dwell on for a bit so that they can understand a difficult concept or analyze the wording of a specific quotation**
- **They are polished and proofread before the presentation happens**

- ***** This is an example of a not-very-good-slide! How could it be improved?**



- Share the following link with the class and discuss ways to make slides more inclusive.

<https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/office/make-your-powerpoint-presentations-accessible-to-people-with-disabilities-6f7772b2-2f33-4bd2-8ca7-dae3b2b3ef25>

The original version of this chapter contained H5P content. You may want to remove or replace this element.

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