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CRITERIA FOR PUBLIC SPEECH PLANNING – CHARACTERISTICS OF LANGUAGE LEARNING

1 INTRODUCTION

Public speaking can be defined as the production of monological spoken discourse designed for a wider or narrower public. Public speaking is embedded in the process of communication: this, in general, refers to the exchange of words between people. At least two people participate in this process: a producer or a transmitter (i.e. the one who speaks or writes) and a recipient (i.e. the one who listens or reads). Thus, communication comprises transmission/communication (i.e. production and sending of texts) and reception and understanding/comprehension of various spoken and written texts (Križaj Ortar/Kržišnik/Bešter 1994, cf. Križaj Ortar et al. 2008: 29).

Toporišič (2000: 714) considers public speaking to be the transmission component that relates to public speaking and rhetoric. This involves the producer of a text verbally addressing the recipient. In such communication, intense concentration is required such that the concreteness and requirements of verbal expression in a specific text type are expressed; moreover, mass recipients are also emphasised. Križaj Ortar et al. (1999, cf. 2008: 42–46) define public speaking within the overall preparation specific to successful communication. If the transmitter wishes to be wholly successful, he/she must effect careful planning and execution in certain stages. These are as follows: conceptualisation, arrangement of material, expression in words, correction of the first draft of the text, copying of the corrected text and source detailing, text memorisation, correction of clarifications for public speaking and – in conclusion – public speech delivery. In contrast to oral communication, written communication is subject to specific preparation and careful planning.

Public speaking is defined in various scholarly works as a dynamic process in which the speaker and listener are in constant interaction (e.g. Gregory 1990: 12). This process helps develop high-quality speaking and listening skills. It is composed of seven elements: speaker, listener, message, channel, feedback information, interruptions and conditions (*in situ*). In public speaking, we can discuss the situation, which includes listeners and a public. In the process of communication, the speaker plays a more important role than does the public (Barker/Gaut 1996: 225). This refers to official and public communication, in which great attention is paid to the verbal message/communication. Morreale and Pearson discuss communication carried out in

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public, which can be equated with public speaking. They define it as a process which plays a key role in personal development and in the promotion of relationships; it enables the development of better communication skills and also constitutes a basis for successful participation in educational environments. It enables the development of skills and sensitivity to social life. This is also the basis for career development (Morreale/Pearson 2008: 225). In the present paper, we share the viewpoint of the aforementioned authors, who assert that "professional competence for public speaking is a pre-condition for personal, professional and academic success – the skill of efficient and adequate public speaking must be learnt" (Morreale/Pearson 2008: 225).

From a methodological point of view, the article is divided into two parts. The first part is designed as a theoretical debate; the analytical-descriptive and the analytical-interpretative methods of educational research (Sagadin 1993; Mužić 1994a and 1994b) are applied. Criteria for preparation, delivery and estimation of public speaking were defined and divided into four main sections, i.e. construction of public speech, integral mode of oral presentation, verbal language, non-verbal language. In the empirical part of the article, the quantitative paradigm of pedagogical research was pursued (statistical procedure: arithmetic mean calculation), the method is descriptive (Sagadin 1993). Theoretical findings were tested in practice. The immediate possibility of students of the Faculty of Education at the University in Ljubljana (prospective teachers) engaging in public speaking was evaluated. A five-stage descriptive-numerical scale[1] was adopted for the assessment of these criteria, within which the execution of public speaking was defined in terms of points on a scale of one to five. The public speaking skills of 211 students were assessed.

2 PUBLIC SPEECH CRITERIA

For the preparation, delivery and evaluation of public speeches, 19 independent criteria or parameters were defined and ranked among the four main aforementioned categories.

2.1 Construction of public speech

When preparing and delivering a public speech, the typical structure of the selected text type must be taken into consideration. Often, this text type happens to be a summary in which the transmitter does not describe an event/procedure or characteristics of an animal, plant or object, etc., but in which he/she summarises, in his/her own words, the content of the text which was read, listened to or viewed (Kapko et al. 2005: 82). While preparing for the public speech, we must also decide what is to be communicated and presented. The topic can be chosen by us, or someone else may choose it for us. Then, we must decide what we will say about the chosen topic, which sub-topics will help us develop the topic and, thus, build the content. The topic is what is talked about in the speech. The content is what we learn about the topic. We must assess

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[1] The scale is available, upon request, from the author of this article.

which aspect(s) of the topic should be communicated to the recipient and/or in how much detail the topic should be presented. Since the transmitter prepares the topic thoroughly, he/she knows a great deal about it. However, it is also good practice to assess what the recipient may have known about this topic prior to hearing the speech or what he/she does not know, what could be interesting for him/her, what he/she understands and what he/she does not, which data are adequate according to the communication circumstances, etc. In fact, the text is adequate if we take into consideration the recipient, time and place of communication as well as the occasion specific to which the text is produced (cf. Križaj Ortar et al. 2008; Vogel et al. 2007). In texts, topics are often not developed in only one way; we try to present them more integrally and from multiple points of view. Although, in general, only one or two methods of topic development, which create the so-called thread, prevail, the inter-twining of different methods is also typical for some texts. Vogel and others (2007: 63–74) distinguish five independent modes of topic development, i.e. informing, description, narration, explanation and clarification. Modes of topic development are defined similarly, but in a different order (description, narration, explanation, clarification, informing) by Zajc Berzelak and Velikonja (2007: 63–68). On the basis of the prevailing type of semantic relationship among the sentences in the text, Križaj Ortar et al. (2010: 49) distinguish four modes of topic development or style procedures, i.e.: description (in which an enumeration relationship prevails), narration (in which a temporal relationship prevails), explanation (in which a relationship of cause, of cause and effect, or purpose or condition, prevails) and clarification (in which an explanatory or conclusive relationship prevails). Besides these four modes, they – independently – discuss informing, all basic data about the topic being represented within a single sentence. This does not mean that every text message is a text. Text is understood as a meaningful, comprehensible text message and forms an integrated whole (Vogel et al. 2007: 55). The definition by Križaj Ortar (2008: 74) and Zajc Berzelak and Velikonja (2007: 62) is very similar; they define texts as those verbal messages which are meaningful (the purpose of the transmitter, and the topic – why the message was created and what it talks about – are recognisable), mutually dependent (individual parts of the text are logically and grammatically connected with one another; sentences are logically inter-linked) and which form an integrated whole (in terms of content and form – no data essential for understanding are absent).

2.2 Integral mode of oral presentation

An integral mode of oral presentation refers to especially fluent, natural, free speaking and clear diction. Since a public speech is usually prepared beforehand, oral presentation is expected from the speaker. Fluent speaking is to be understood as speech unmarked by faltering, e.g. speech in which the speaker does not repeat words or phrases, does not express the repeated data with a recurring word and does not use expletives. If the speaker is well prepared for the speech, he/she sounds more natural, pronouncing non-compound prepositions in a connected manner and experiencing less stage fright. Artificial or unnatural speaking caused by stage fright, un-

prepared speech, a lack of mastery of the social genre of language, etc., should be avoided. Because free speaking is typical for public speaking, the speech should be delivered freely, ideally without a written outline. Clear diction or clear articulation is understood as voice modulation, manipulating the speech organs or pronunciation (SSKJ). This refers to clear articulation of the voice and voice parts. Podbevšek (1997: 29) defines the bases of clear diction, which are as follows: sufficiently stretched mouth muscles, sufficient mouth opening, adequate speech speed and calm, but not monotonous, speech rhythm, correct pronunciation effected by an individual voice and by multiple voices together.

2.3 Verbal language

The fundamental means of communication is verbal language, which represents a pre-arranged composition of word signs and rules for the creation of texts. In social terms, one can differentiate between literary language (standard language and literary-colloquial language) and non-literary social genres (relating to area: dialect, city language, provincial colloquial language; relating to interests: slang, jargon, argot) (cf. Toporišič 2000, Vogel et al. 2007 and Križaj Ortar et al. 2008). Standard literary language is especially important for this debate. It is the language used in public speeches, i.e. when addressing a large group of people, for example when addressing a class using a prepared public speech. In these texts, language rules and the so-called good style principle should be consistently taken into account. The problematic use of standard literary language in Slovenia can be summed up by the description provided by Šeruga Prek and Antončič, who assert that there is no place in Slovenia where a planned practical lesson on the use of standard literary language exists. The only institutions which offer this are the Academy for Theatre, Radio, Film and Television and Radio Slovenia, the latter offering a year-long internal programme of language and speaking training for its journalists and announcers (Šeruga Prek/Antončič 2004: 7–15).

The selection of words and the use thereof in a public speech must be carefully planned, taking into consideration the speaking situation, i.e. with regard to topic, text type, subjectivity/objectivity, etc. Every word means something. Most words have not only one meaning, but several meanings. The same word can be used to denote different things, but on the other hand, the same thing can be denoted by different words (Vogel et al. 2007: 92, 95; Vogel et al. 2008: 30; Križaj Ortar et al. 2008: 8; Vogel et al. 2010: 95).

2.4 Non-verbal language

Every spoken language has its accompanying non-verbal component. There are auditory non-verbal speech cues (intonation, stress, speed, breaks, register, pitch) and visual non-verbal speech cues (facial expressions and eye contact; hand gestures and movement) (Križaj Ortar et al. 2008). Although speech is apparently the most important form of human communication, non-verbal communication forms the greater part of communication (Kovačič 1990) and is very important for the creation of the

social environment. In teaching, it determines credibility, competence, capability, persuasiveness, clarity, activity, etc. and is very important for the development of motivational, evaluatory and management skills.

Auditory features of the message are voice and accent. Words indicate the subject matter. Every sentence also has its own intonation; we apply longer or shorter breaks between words or sentences and put more or less stress on certain words, articulate them slowly or swiftly. In this way, we transmit to the listener, for example, our own purpose of speaking as well as the importance of specific data (for example, we will stress it in the speech or articulate it a little more slowly). Moreover, the voice can also give us some information about the transmitter and his/her attitude to the interlocutor or the listener. The voice can tell us if the speaker is a man or a woman, a child or an adult, etc.; articulation can tell us from which province the speaker comes, and whether Slovenian is his/her first language or the language of his/her environment. Auditory features of the message thus comprise the voice, which gives the words different meanings, and word stress, which usually indicates if there are one or two words. If the voice were to be consistently articulated with the same rhythm, pitch and voice, it would be difficult to follow such a text. Our speech can be seen as being composed of many smaller units, since auditory features of every text comprise not only voices and accents, but also other elements, such as the use of tone or intonation in the sentence; stress on selected words; varying speeds for the articulation of less or more important parts of the sentence; short or long breaks between parts of the sentence or sentences; varying vocal/timbre pitches or registers (Toporišič 2000: 539, 542–551, 553–554; Križaj Ortar et al. 2008: 97–101; Vogel 2010: 157–158).

In public speaking, listeners usually also see us (exceptions are, for example, listening to the radio, and telephone conversations); thus, they also receive the non-verbal part of our message. According to K. Podbevšek (2006), besides voice, movement is a compulsory component of speech. This means that appropriate facial expressions and gestures are indispensable components of a good speech. They can help the teacher to emphasise syntactic stress, enhance the emotional attitude to the narrative, dramatise a less interesting subject and supplement the elliptical message. Facial expressions and gestures can, of course, also carry an independent message. While we are usually well aware of verbal messages, non-verbal communication usually takes place unconsciously. If the listener accepts only the verbal component and does not take into consideration the non-verbal component, a misunderstanding can arise (Petek 2006: 76–77).

Facial expressions are always visible when one speaks; they constantly create numerous signs and provide information. The human face has immense communicative potential. It participates in the transmission of messages regarding the emotional state, the expression of intra-personal relationships, non-verbal reactions to the comments of others, etc. It also has an influence upon the adjustment of the communication. Different facial parts are used to open and close communication channels, to supplement, emphasise or mitigate (evaluate) verbal or non-verbal reactions and to substitute speaking (Knapp/Hall 2002: 305–308). Facial expressions can be controlled

to a great extent so that the listener can sometimes hardly distinguish between those that are spontaneous and those that are intentional. Positive facial expressions which are appropriate for public speaking comprise not only smiling, but also the comprehensive activity of the facial musculature by means of which we show our attitude and feelings towards something, especially with specificity to the expressed content of the message.

In this way, we show how we wish the listener to understand what we want to express; e.g. if something is funny, serious or very important. Ekman found that the speaker often reinforces vowel stress on a specific part of a sentence or word by raising the eyebrows. This action (besides rising vocal intonation) indicates that a sentence is a question, in spite of the fact that it may not be a question in grammatical terms. The wrinkling of the eyebrows can indicate the search for a word or thought that cannot be recalled by the transmitter's memory at a specific moment (Bavelas/Gerwing 2007: 297–298).

Besides facial expressions, eye contact is also very important in public speaking. The speaker must try to speak in such a way that every listener is made to feel that the message is directed at him/her. This can be done if the speaker makes eye contact with individual listeners regardless of their number. Thus, the audience is forced to listen to him/her and prepares itself for active and purposeful listening. The bigger the group, the harder is the task of the speaker. We must be aware that staring at the floor or ceiling, through the window or door, or vacantly into space is inappropriate. Even if some parallel mental processes take place in our minds (if we think about what we have already said, what we are going to say, whether we are successful speakers or if listeners understand us. etc.), we must make and keep eye contact at all times while speaking.

Gesticulation denotes gestures and hand movements. Ekman and Friesen (Guerrero/De Vito in Hecht 1999: 46–47) define five types of hand gestures, i.e.: symbolic, illustrative, emotional and regulatory gestures. By contrast, Knapp and Hall (2002: 9, 230–250) divide hand gestures into two categories, i.e. gestures which are speech-independent (verbal clarification not being required for the understanding of such gestures) and gestures connected to speech (indicating what is expressed). Spatial movement agitates and simultaneously variegates speech; however, we must be careful not to use it to excess.

3 EMPIRICAL ORIENTATION

In the empirical part of the article, the quantitative paradigm of pedagogical research was pursued (statistical procedure: arithmetic mean calculation), the method is descriptive (Sagadin 1993). A total of 19 criteria for the direct evaluation of public speaking abilities specific to students at the Faculty of Education, University of Ljubljana, were defined and then divided into four main categories, which were discussed in the theoretical part of this article. For the evaluation of these criteria, a five-stage descriptive-numerical scale was adopted. The public speaking skills of 104 students out of 109 students enrolled in the second year were evaluated, i.e. 95% of all students (aca-

demic year 2010/11), and 107 students out of 118 students enrolled in the third year, i.e. 91% of all students (academic year 2011/12). Evaluation was carried out specific to all students who took part in compulsory practice lessons, so that the realisation rate was 100%. Table 1 below displays information about the model used in the research.

Year	Number of enrolled students	Average age (l)	Male (%)	Female (%)	Secondary school –general upper secondary school (%)
2nd	109	19.97	2.86	96.08	98.04
3rd	118	21.12	3.92	97.14	97.14

Table 1: Basic information on the model of students included in the research.

In the following paragraphs of this article, the results of public speaking evaluation are presented for each criterion. The realisation of criteria was evaluated in practice within the parameters of the public speech made by each second and third year student on the basis of the above-mentioned evaluatory scale. Overall, all average marks of third year students were better than the average marks of second year students (see Tables 2–5), which means that the progress of students (prospective teachers) is evident and can be seen on the basis of the average marks calculated. The criteria which were not met by the second year students will be commented upon and suggestions for their improved performance will be made. Finally, a conclusion and an explanation of criteria met in the public speaking of second and third year students will be provided.

1.	PUBLIC SPEECH CONSTRUCTION	2nd year/3rd year
1.1	Consideration of text type characteristics	3.97/4.96
1.2	Appropriate topic and selected content	4.25/4.96
1.3	Appropriate mode of topic development	3.59/4.02
1.4	Formation of a meaningful, comprehensible and integrated text	3.74/4.91

Table 2: Findings on the realisation of public speech construction.

The public speech construction of second year students shows that students did not meet the criterion of appropriate topic development. In order to fulfil this criterion more successfully, the following is suggested: in laboratory exercises, students (i.e. prospective teachers) should carry out exercises on style procedures recognition (read and study different texts in which they look for typical style procedures and eliminate possible errors). They should independently construct sentences in which they develop topics according to a precisely defined style procedure in order to obtain a feel for each mode of topic development. In fact, within the parameters of work obligations, prospective teachers will have to, among other things, write different reports, for example on parent-teacher meetings, office consultation hours, daily activities (sports, cultural, technical), educational and evaluatory sessions, students with special needs, students subject

to so-called disciplinary proceedings, etc. They should be familiar with typical modes of topic development for each text that will be formulated, and should recognise which style procedures are pertinent to the so-called thread within the specific type of text.

2.	INTEGRAL MODE OF PUBLIC SPEECH	2nd year/3rd year
2.1	Fluent, natural and free speaking	3.28/4.42
2.2	Clear diction	3.88/4.90

Table 3: Findings on the realisation of the integral mode of oral presentation.

In the integral mode of public speech, the most problems encountered by second year students were specific to fluent, natural and free speaking. In order to meet this criterion, the following is suggested: students should be well-versed in the topic of the speech in a broader sense. They should also study the background of the topic, link characteristics, establish connections between subjects, be familiar with the different views on the topic and compare the various topics in different ways. This will permit them to talk fluently and freely. It is very important that they do not learn the oral speech by heart according to a written outline, but rather form a monological text in meaningful, comprehensible and integral units simultaneous to the development of thoughts and reactions. Even if they falter while speaking, they can substitute the content of the speech with other data that they do not, initially, wish to include in the speech, since they know the text better and, in the interim, can recall the thread of the speech. Thus, they can speak smoothly and continue fluently. If the speaker is experienced, listeners do not notice this difficulty.

Thus, fluent and natural speech is strengthened (e.g. non-compound prepositions are articulated in a connected manner; natural speech is the opposite of unnatural and artificial speech; what the speaker wants to express must be done in a persuasive and interesting manner). If students are well prepared for a speech, stage fright is diminished, and they are relaxed and self-confident. It is also suggested that students (prospective teachers) do not follow a written outline while making a public speech, but that they confine themselves to a few points of reference in the form of a mind map, simply in order to provide emotive orientation.

3.	VERBAL LANGUAGE	2nd year/3rd year
3.1	Social genre	3.93/4.88
3.2	Selection of words consistent with speech	4.08/4.80
3.3	Grammatical correctness	3.57/4.10
3.4	Correct pronunciation	
3.4.1	Formal constructions	3.30/3.97
3.4.2	Formal (dynamic) accent	3.66/4.49

Table 4: Findings on the realisation of verbal language in public speaking.

In terms of the realisation of verbal language in public speaking, second year students had most problems with standard Slovene pronunciation. This was also evinced by third year students. This was the criterion specific to which third year students scored the lowest average marks. It is recommended that during practice lessons the teacher should first explain to all students the theoretical basics and then provide concrete, actual examples, i.e. those taken from the oral texts formulated by students. It is further suggested that systematic exercises be carried out specific to pronunciation and the practising of short speeches, the teacher discussing each student's pronunciation mistakes and exploring ways of eliminating them. Thus, each student discovers his/her own model of mistakes and tries to eliminate them as soon as possible, at the same time becoming aware of all pronunciation mistakes of his/her fellow students. Because a student perceives them in this manner, there is the possibility that he/she, positively motivated, will not include them in his/her oral speeches. Consistent use of language manuals – *Slovenski pravopis* ("Slovenian Orthography") (2001 or 2003) and *Slovar slovenskega knjižnega jezika* ("Dictionary of Standard Slovenian") is also recommended. Applying all the exercises detailed, the selection of words as well as the pronunciation capacity will increase. The Web version of *Slovenski pravopis*, accessible at http://bos.zrc-sazu.si/sp2001.html, is also recommended. Searching is easy and available to all who can use the Internet. A phonetics laboratory, in which pronunciation can be exercised in a high-quality and practical manner, is highly recommendable for pronunciation exercises.

4.	NON-VERBAL LANGUAGE	2nd year/3rd year
4.1	Auditory non-verbal speech cues	3.52/4.51
4.2	Visual non-verbal speech cues	3.53/4.01

Table 5: Findings on the realisation of non-verbal language in public speaking.

Regarding the use of non-verbal language, second year students had greater problems with non-verbal auditory speech cues than with visual ones. Thus, the speaker must consciously fulfil the requisite criteria and be aware of the fact that the presence of these cues makes the speech clearer and more comprehensible and interesting so that he/she exerts a more positive influence upon the listeners and holds their attention.

To conclude, the criteria which were most successfully fulfilled by all second and third year students are delineated. Among the second year students, these were the criteria specific to the appropriateness of the topic and selection of content (4.25), while third year students most successfully fulfilled criteria pertinent to the consideration of text type characteristics (4.96), appropriateness of the topic and selection of content (4.96).

4 CONCLUSION

On the basis of the criteria defined and presented for public speaking (preparation, execution, evaluation), the realisation of these was verified in practice: it was established that in order to deliver a high-quality and effective speech, thorough preparation, comprising the consideration of criteria for the preparation, execution and evaluation of speech, is necessary. The defined, presented and tested criteria which we discussed could be used by teachers for a modern and efficient educational process at all educational levels and for their own pedagogical speech in class; these criteria could be used by teachers to teach students and pupils public speaking as well as for the assessment and evaluation of their speeches, public speaking being rendered compulsory within the curriculum of the Slovenian language as a subject both within primary school and secondary school. In short, the criteria presented in this article could constitute a helpful tool for anyone preparing for public speaking.

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Abstract
CRITERIA FOR PUBLIC SPEECH PLANNING
– CHARACTERISTICS OF LANGUAGE LEARNING

Public speaking is understood as monological discourse production, directed at a wider or narrower public or group of people. The theoretical part of this article introduces the characteristics of effective public speaking; criteria were designed for the preparation of a public speech, and four main sections defined, i.e. a) construction of public speech (consideration of text type characteristics, appropriateness of the topic and selection of content, appropriateness of the mode of topic development, formation of a meaningful, comprehensible and integrated text); b) integral mode of public speech (fluent, natural and free speaking, clear diction); c) verbal language (social genre, selection of words consistent with the speech, grammatical correctness, correct pronunciation, formal constructions, formal [dynamic] accent), non-verbal language (auditory non-verbal speech cues, visual non-verbal speech cues). The fulfilment of these criteria was tested in practice, namely on second and third year undergraduate students (prospective teachers) (N = 211). On the whole, all the average marks of third year students

were better than those of the second year students. The most common difficulty facing the students was fluent, natural and free speaking as well as appropriate topic development, whereas the most successfully fulfilled criteria were those of appropriate topic selection and consideration of text type characteristics.

Keywords: language learning, monological speech, public speech, speaking, criteria for public speaking.

Povzetek
MERILA ZA PRIPRAVO NA JAVNI GOVORNI NASTOP
– ZAKONITOSTI USVAJANJA JEZIKA

Javno govorno nastopanje razumemo kot tvorjenje enogovornih govorjenih besedil, namenjenih širši ali ožji javnosti oz. skupini. Prispevek v teoretičnem delu predstavlja zakonitosti učinkovitega javnega govornega nastopanja; oblikovali smo merila za pripravo na javni govorni nastop in opredelili štiri glavna področja, tj.: a) zgradba govornega nastopa (upoštevanje značilnosti besedilne vrste, ustreznost teme in izbire vsebine, ustreznost načina razvijanja teme, oblikovanje smiselnega, razumljivega in zaokroženega besedila); b) celostni način govorne predstavitve (tekoče, naravno, prosto in razločno govorjenje); c) besedni jezik (socialna zvrst jezika, izbira besed glede na govorni položaj, slovnična pravilnost, pravorečni izgovor); č) nebesedni jezik (slušni nebesedni spremljevalci govorjenja, vidni nebesedni spremljevalci govorjenja). Uresničevanje meril smo preverili v praksi, in sicer pri študentih (prihodnjih učiteljih) v 2. in 3. letniku dodiplomskega izobraževanja (N = 211). Gledano celostno, so vse povprečne ocene študentov v 3. letniku boljše od povprečnih ocen študentov v 2. letniku. Pri javnem govornem nastopanju so imeli študentje največ težav s tekočim, z naravnim in s prostim govorjenjem ter z ustreznostjo načina razvijanja teme, najbolje uresničevani merili pa sta bili ustreznost teme in izbire vsebine ter upoštevanje značilnosti besedilne vrste.

Ključne besede: usvajanje jezika, enogovorno govorjeno besedilo, javni govor, govorno nastopanje, merila za javni govorni nastop.