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МЕТОДЫ И НАВЫКИ ОБЩЕСТВЕННОГО ПРОИЗНОШЕНИЕ

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TECHNIQUES OF PUBLIC SPEAKING SKILLS

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*Для многих людей, в частности, для студентов гуманитарных вузов, выступление с речью перед аудиторией – является одним из самых больших страхов. В этой статье мы рассмотрим некоторые способы, методы, как помочь студентам и преодолеть трудности и решить эту задачу, как впечатлить зрителей своим выступлением.*

*For many people, standing up in public and doing a speech is one of their greatest fears. For many language students in particular, this is the ultimate challenge. In this article we will look at some ways we can help intermediate level students to overcome the difficulties involved and explore some techniques for making their speeches as impressive as possible.*

What is public speaking?

Public speaking involves talking in front of a group of people, usually with some preparation. It can be in front of people that you know (e.g. at a family celebration) or a group of strangers. Unlike a presentation there normally isn't a lot of opportunity for interaction between the audience and the speaker - the speaker speaks, and the audience (hopefully) listens. Speeches have different functions. These include being persuasive (e.g. trying to convince the audience to vote for you), informative (e.g. speaking about the dangers of climate change), entertaining (e.g. a best man's speech at a wedding) or celebratory (e.g. to introduce the winner of an award). Some speeches may have more than one of these aims.

Why is public speaking useful for students?

Most people, at some point in their life, will need to stand up and speak in front of a group of people. Teaching students the necessary skills for doing this will therefore help them to do this more successfully. As a result of the practice, students often report an increase in general confidence as well as a marked sense of achievement. Many students get incredibly nervous the first time they have to do a speech in front of their classmates but with practice the nerves subside and they usually begin to enjoy the whole process. Working on public speaking also helps to develop students' overall fluency and requires them to consider how they speak as well as what they say. This is useful for speaking in any situation, public or otherwise.

What techniques can we teach our students?

a) Ideas / content generation

Lots of students find getting started quite difficult. It's a good idea to give students either a type of public speech that you would like them to do, or a particular topic. It's often useful to get students working in groups at the planning stage, helping each other to come up with ideas. Showing students a variety of ways of making notes of ideas works well as not everyone likes the same methods. These could include mind-mapping, making lists or writing ideas on post-it notes and then arranging them on a piece of paper into groups

b) Structure

Stress the importance of having a beginning, middle and end and keep reminding them of this. You might then like to give them a standard introduction to use for their first speech. For example, "Good evening. My name is x and today I am going to talk about y. I will talk about three main areas, x, y and z". This then gives them a focus for the structure of the rest of the speech. It can seem a little dry, however, so once they get the idea it's worth experimenting with different styles of beginning - e.g. using jokes and anecdotes

Many students are so relieved to have got to their end of their speech that they rush the conclusion or sometimes completely forget to do one. Again, a suggested format may help them to summarise what they have said.

c) Body language

There are various statistics for how much of our communication is done through our body language - they seem to hover around 70%, which is a massive chunk, so some work in this area is a very good idea.

Posture: Doing an activity where you get everyone to stand up and then suddenly 'freeze' works well. You then ask everyone to stay still but look around at how everyone is standing. Then try getting everyone to stand straight and well-centred, behind the podium if you have one to use. You'll be surprised how many people rock from side to side or slouch. Sounds pretty basic but it can make a big difference to how confident and in control someone appears to be.

Gestures: One way to practise these is to give out some sentences with key words in them, such as "I caught a fish and it was this big!" or "there are three important reasons why you should vote for me". Ask the students to practise saying these sentences while standing up and work out what gestures might be the most appropriate. Stress the importance of keeping gestures controlled.

Eye contact: It's very important that speakers make eye contact with all areas of the room, ideally with every person but with large audiences that isn't possible. Many students tend to look at one spot or at the teacher. One way to practise this is to ask each student to do a short 30 second introduction and then at the end get any student who feels the speaker did not look in his/her direction to raise their hand.

d) Chunking (pauses and stress)

This is a technique which can help speakers to sound much more confident and increase the overall effectiveness of their speech. The theory is that when we do this type of speaking we stress the key words in a sentence which carry the meaning, e.g. "I DON'T want you to just SIT there and DO NOTHING" We also pause after many of these key words, and at the end of a sentence.

To practise this, try playing your students an example

of a speech - Earl Spencer's eulogy speech for Diana is a good one for this, or Martin Luther King's 'I have a dream'. Ask them to listen and identify the stressed words and pauses from a small section of the speech and then practise delivering it in the same manner. They can then mark the stress and pauses on their own speeches and practise incorporating the idea into their own work. It really makes a difference!

#### Common problems and solutions

##### Lack of confidence

This is very common and one that only practice, practice and more practice will help to overcome. You could also try getting the students to first speak in front of three or four others, then adding to the number as they become more confident. Reminding students to breathe properly while they're speaking as well as thinking positively about their ability to speak well will also help, along with lots of encouragement

##### Speaking too fast

This is another common one, usually caused by nerves. Try getting them to do the introduction of the speech in an exaggeratedly slow manner. Once they have done this a few times they may find it easier to find a middle ground.

##### Appropriacy of body language

If this is a problem, try videoing the speaker and asking them to watch themselves. They will usually be able to identify where the problems lie and then work on improving these areas. Raising awareness is the most important thing here.

##### Boring speeches!

It's really important to get the students to think carefully about their audience when planning their speech. For example, if they want to do a speech about the dangers of smoking, but no one in the class smokes, this probably won't be very interesting. Encourage the students to think of creative ideas for their speeches - do the planning stage in class so that you and the other students can monitor and give advice on topics that look like they might get a few yawns.

##### Appropriacy of style

Here again it is important that the students think about their audience. You might like to play them several different examples of famous speeches and ask them to comment on the style and discuss the purpose of

the speech and the audience, before reflecting on their own.

#### Giving and encouraging feedback

This is a very important part of the process and can take three general forms:

1. Peer
2. From the teacher
3. Video-taping and playback

For feedback from peers and from the teacher it's best to choose particular areas to give feedback on for each speech, rather than trying to cover everything. This might be based on the techniques you have recently been looking at in class (e.g. using gestures, chunking, structure, etc.) or as a result of feedback on a previous speech. It's a good idea to go through what you expect of the students when giving peer feedback as sometimes students can be very vague. Make up a sheet with a (short) list of the areas to look at to help them focus their comments and encourage them to say positive as well as constructive things.

Video-taping is an invaluable method of helping students to see where their strengths and weaknesses lie. The only drawback, apart from the technical side of using the camera, is the time it takes to do and playback. This can be partially overcome by videoing sections of speeches, rather than the whole thing for each.

Conclusion: in this article we have looked at a variety of techniques that can be used to help students develop the necessary skills for delivering public speeches. Practice in these areas can help to increase your students' overall confidence and fluency and provide an interesting and useful diversion from regular public speeches.

#### Literature:

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