

# Language, Style and Publication in a University Context



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# Speech-drafting

- Definition and some basic considerations
- Types and structure
- Matters of language and style
- How to “manage” a speech



# For our discussion today, a speech is

- A piece of writing for verbal delivery
- There is no immediate feedback, talk-back or interlocution
- It may be drafted or improvised, or both



# Some basics that the drafter has to consider

- Whatever the standing of the speaker, the drafter must be able to put himself in the place of the audience, ie, the speech must match the level of understanding of the audience
- Unless the text is available in print, the drafter/speaker only has the memory of the audience to rely on for the argument, details and whatever story he has to tell



# Basics .....

- When listening to a speech, the audience cannot roll back to recap what has been just said. Hence the importance of making the listeners REGISTER



# Types – only the commonly encountered types are shown here

- Civic (the only one we are considering today)
- Religious
- Forensic
- Academic



# Forms commonly used in a university context

- Speech at a university event or ceremonial
- Speech given by a senior officer of the university as a guest at an outside event
- Speech at a meal or other social events
- Address at a press occasion (press conference, radio broadcast, television interview etc)



# A good speech is structured like a well-made essay

- Since you can only rely on the listeners' memory, the points you present need to be very LOGICAL and easy to follow
- It is old-fashioned to declare the *schema* at the beginning of the speech, but this practice has its merit when the presentation is long and involves a lot of details



# There are many ways to structure a speech

- While a speech has to be coherent and well-structured, there is no specific form that it must take. The presentation of matters may be in chronological or anti-chronological order, or begin *in media res*. The syllogism may work from the general to the specific or the other way round



# The five essential sections of a speech

- Salutation
- Introduction
- Development
- Recapitulation
- Conclusion



# Language and style do matter ....

- Clarity reigns above all else in a speech. Not only must you draft the speech in language that is easy to understand, but you must, even more importantly, bear in mind the public speaking skills of the person who delivers it. Use short sentences ALWAYS



# Language and style do matter ....

- Avoid using big words. Use everyday words and expressions, rather than academic or latinate words
- Use words that are easy for the audience to register, and build your speech around some key words and key phrases
- Do not be scared of repetitions. A speech is an essay for the ear – and repeated words and phrases help memory



# Language and style do matter ....

- Some experts have identified the following devices as keys to a successful speech:
  - ◆ Contrasts
  - ◆ Lists and alliterations
  - ◆ Bold imagery
  - ◆ Anecdotes
  - ◆ Appeal to emotion



# Some formalities ....

- Make sure that you get the order correct in the salutations. The most important person comes first. Mr Chancellor, Mr Chairman, Mr Vice-Chancellor, and so on. It is not a good practice to suffix a person's surname with his functional title. When a lady is involved, the correct form is Madam Chairman etc



# More formalities ....

- The rule is the same at other civic and social gatherings – if uncertain about the precedence of the persons to be addressed, consult someone in the know



# The use of quotations

- Quotations are very useful if employed appropriately. However, do not quote abruptly. However great the authority being quoted, you must first establish some connection between the quote and the text, ie, one must quote in context. And the quote must be relevant, and of a suitable length (ie, not too long)



# “Managing” a speech

- Here we shall consider the practical matters that may fall within the duties of the drafter and which concern the speech as an actual means of communication, not just an essay on the printed page. This section comes in three parts: the drafting stage, the delivery stage and the post-delivery stage



# Drafting

- Ideally, the drafter should have a meeting with the speaker. If this cannot be arranged, try to talk to his or her assistant(s)
- Do the research if the speech requires some factual support
- If a long speech, submit an outline before doing the first draft



# Delivery

- A speech is usually “embargoed” before delivery. In government circles and high commerce, it is customary for draft speeches to be exchanged
- If the text of the speech is to be distributed to the audience and/or the press, care must be taken to have sufficient quantities produced



## More about delivery ....

- In the case of a recorded speech, there may be the need of an autocue or teleprompter
- The standard format of the speaker's copy is that the speech is printed on postcard-sized cards held together with a green tag. Some speakers may prefer the sentences to be cut into manageable phrases, separated by slashes



# Speech at a meal

- Find out beforehand the exact position of the speech on the run-down
- The drafter should consider whether appropriate to propose a toast – if the speaker follows the text, and proposes one, and there are no drinks served, then it would be embarrassment all round



# When the speech is over ....

- There may be a Q&A session, a press session, or just wildcat questions fired from all directions. It is always wise for some questions to be anticipated, and for a “line-to-take” to be prepared. The speaker’s answers to their questions are always more interesting to the journalists than the speech itself.



➤ **THAT IS ALL FOR NOW.  
THANK YOU FOR YOUR  
PATIENCE AND HAVE A  
GOOD WEEK.**

