



实用演讲技巧

Sue Kay (英) 著

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Introduction

The purpose of this book is to help people who have a good command of the English language but find it difficult to make their voices heard.

I was prompted to write it because I am often asked by students and particularly by business people why it is that although they know the language and know their subject, they often find it difficult to communicate in English. Business people find it difficult to take part in meetings and sometimes even to have a satisfactory conversation on a social level. Many people, both native and non-native speakers of English, find it difficult to give an effective speech in public. Too often, listeners are bored because the speaker doesn't know how to deliver their speech effectively. (This is true in any language!)

The typical reader of this book, therefore, is likely to be a person who is planning a business career or anyone in business who can read English.

Practical Presentations provides tips, techniques and exercises to help people learn how to improve communication in English socially, at work and in meetings. It gives technical help (including examples) with the often difficult task of effectively delivering a business presentation or a speech in front of an audience. There is also a chapter covering public relations and press releases.

The book offers

- useful phrases for use in conversation
- useful phrases suitable for meetings which ensure a voice is heard
- tips on how to behave in different circumstances in order to be heard
- exercises to provide practice either at school / university or at training classes at work
- technical tips and suitable language for writing an effective presentation
- a model of an excellent business presentation
- information about how to deliver a speech
- information about how to write an effective and interesting speech
- insight into how to evaluate a speech
- a suggestion as to how to practise public speaking effectively
- tips and techniques in fostering public relations
- how to write a good press release
- examples of effective press releases

My research has included many interviews with Chinese and native English-speaking business people in which I have identified and analysed the problems. I have obtained suggestions from many sources including professionals in different fields.

Why Presentation?

Presentation comes from the root *present* – originally from the Latin *praesentare* (place before).

Presentation is a noun meaning:

the action or an instance of presenting or being presented and the manner or style in which something is presented.

To present is a verb meaning:

- *give formally or ceremonially*
- *offer for acceptance or consideration*
- *formally introduce (someone) to someone else*
- *put (e.g. a show or exhibition) before the public*
- *introduce and appear in (e.g. a television or radio show)*
- *be the cause of (e.g. a problem)*
- *exhibit (e.g. a particular appearance) to others*
- *appear formally before others (i.e. present oneself)*
- *come forward for medical examination for a particular condition or symptom (i.e. present with)*

We can see, therefore, that *presentation* has a number of different connotations, dependent on the context. The **two meanings** that we are most concerned with and which will be considered here are:

- ① how we *present ourselves* to others; that is, how we look, behave or speak, especially in a formal context such as at work.

In other words, the impression we give.

- ② how we *give a presentation*; that is, how we offer, in a formal way, ideas, plans or facts for others to consider or for information.

In other words, the formal delivery of information.

Units 1 and 2 are concerned with the first meaning. By looking at some cultural differences and difficulties that are often experienced by us all, we consider how we can ensure that our voice is heard both socially and at work.

Unit 3 is concerned with how to make our voices heard at meetings and therefore involves, in some degree, both aspects of presenting. The role of the chairman is also considered.

In **Units 4 and 5**, we turn our attention to the second meaning, that of how to give a presentation in a business context: how to write a presentation and how to deliver it.

Unit 6 covers formal speeches and discusses how to prepare them.

In **Unit 7**, advice and information are given about how to evaluate your own and others' speeches.

Unit 8 analyses the various elements required to speak effectively in public and offers a method to practise each element.

In **Unit 9**, information is provided about how to prepare and give a press release.

Written examples of a presentation and two press releases are given in the **appendices**.

It must be stressed that every speech is different and every speaker has their own style and ability with language. What is evident, though, is that the more preparation that is done, the better will be the end result. The best speakers are those who have spent considerable time writing, editing and practising. A professional and effective speech or presentation is the result of many hours of preparation. Anyone who says otherwise is not being honest!

UNIT 1

Social Conversation

Introduction

Robert Burns, the 18th century Scottish poet, made a plea that many of us echo when he wrote, "O wad some Power the giftie gie us, to see oursels as ithers see us!" In other words, "I'd be very pleased to know how I appear to others."

We can look in a mirror and see ourselves but we all know that our physical appearance is only part of the picture. Our body language, the tone of our voice and our manner all affect how we are perceived by others. We may think that by adopting a sultry expression or a diffident stance we will appear interesting to others, but the reality may be that we just appear bored and therefore uninteresting.

There are also cultural differences. In some societies, people (especially women) who are too outspoken may appear rather rude; whilst in other societies, they may be the life and soul of the party. In some societies, it is not considered good manners to ask too many questions; whilst in others, a lack of questions may seem like a lack of interest. Indeed, the type of question considered appropriate can vary from culture to culture. In some societies, certain topics are considered inappropriate. It is usually not a good idea to raise private matters in public, but what is considered "private" can vary. Of course, the degree of reserve varies with and between individuals but conversation is usually most difficult and unsatisfactory with people who don't respond and react to comments and situations.

How to survive this apparent minefield is the subject of this unit.

A good conversationalist in English can talk to anyone anywhere. They instinctively change and adapt what they say so that it is accessible and understandable.

- If language is a problem, they will speak slower and be ready to use different words.
- If there is a lot of noise, they will raise their voices and simplify their comments.
- They will listen carefully and really try to understand what is being said to them.
- They think as they talk and try to make connections between the pieces of information that they are exchanging.
- They show their interest, through body language, facial expression, eye contact and especially asking questions and follow-on questions.
- In a group, if they don't know anything about the subject being discussed, they will listen and try to ask "intelligent" questions.

All this will leave the person with whom they have been talking feeling good.

Practice and Preparation

Exercise

1. Think about how you look. Practise some friendly, welcoming facial expressions in front of the mirror.
2. Think about how you sound. Is your voice loud enough to be heard? Do you speak very quickly, making it difficult for people to understand you? Speed does not equal fluency! It is best to try to vary the pace at which you speak. Do you allow your voice to rise and fall as you speak? Do you enunciate your words clearly? Even if a word is incorrectly pronounced, your listener may be able to guess what you mean if you speak clearly and slowly.
3. Think about what you can say. Have you heard a good joke recently? Have you had an interesting experience that you would like to share? Which words do you need?
4. You do not have to use grammatically correct sentences to be able to communicate verbally. Listen to native speakers' conversation!



Aspects of Social Conversation in English

- Generally, social conversation in English between native speakers, even strangers, is quite informal. Between strangers, there will often be a fairly rapid exchange of information about each other until a topic is found that interests both people and then this will be explored in greater detail.
- Much conversation seems to be aimed at looking for similarities, such as shared experiences, friends in common or agreement of opinion. When such similarities are found, they usually give rise to a pleasant, warm, fellow feeling which may lead on to a lasting friendship. Differences are usually considered interesting and are often worthy of being explored so that the conversation may be prolonged.
- Exchanging opinions about almost everything is a very common feature.

"I think" "It seems to me that"

"What do you think ...?" "How do you feel about ...?"

- Much conversation takes the form of telling jokes and anecdotes and of kidding (teasing) about shared experiences. This often gives rise to a lot of fun and laughter, especially between people who know each other. However, questions about problems, experiences or ideas will be expected. For example, if someone you know has been on holiday, it will be expected that you ask about it, thus showing that you are interested in the person even if not the holiday.
- Discussion is also often held in order to clarify thoughts. People may sound out ideas to get reactions and to see if they work without necessarily meaning everything they say.

Getting Started

In Britain, conversation with strangers often starts with a comment about the weather.

"Lovely day!" "Dreadful summer!" "The nights are drawing in."

If the conversation is to continue, comment may become a little more specific.

"This is a pretty town / valley / area."

It can be followed by a question.

"Do you know the area well?" "Are you local?"

Or you may make a comment about what place, thing, time you are sharing.

"This train is hot, isn't it?" "Lovely painting." "Pretty scenery."

"It's going to be a long journey. Are you going on holiday?"

Alternatively, at a party, the conversation may start with something general.

"Lovely party!" "Beautiful house, isn't it." "Great food!"

This is likely to be followed with introductions (since one is usually at a party to meet people).

"I'm Sue. What's your name?"

"Nice to meet you. Are you from America or Europe or ...?"

Having found out a little about each other, the conversation may move back to more general topics or it may become more personal.

"How do you know ... (the hostess / host)? I met Jane years ago when we studied at the same university."

"What do you do?"

"I work at the same company as Tom, in the IT Department. Where do you work?"

"Do you know many people here? This is my first time at Jane's house."

"Do you know that man with the red sweater? He looks familiar but I can't place him."

Keeping Going

If the conversation is to progress and be maintained, it will usually move from general to specific and it may become more personal as the people involved gradually search for common ground. This involves exchange of information, ideas and opinions.

"What do you think about ...?" "I understand"

"I read that Do you think it's a serious problem?"

"I hear David Beckham was in Beijing. Did you go to the game?"

"Have you ever been on a camping holiday / had your photo in a newspaper?"

For a conversation to be successful, it cannot be one-sided. One-sided conversations in which one person asks questions which are answered with a *yes / no* or just a smile are deeply unsatisfactory and will generally come to a quick end, leaving everyone involved feeling uncomfortable. The best solution is to ask open-ended questions or request information. (An open-ended question is a question that cannot be answered with *yes* or *no*.) Adding some comment or information about yourself will help make the conversation more interesting and help it to develop.

"What do you think about...?"

"Please tell me about your hometown."

"Could you please explain what 'conviviality' means. I came across it in a book I'm reading about the kings of England during the Middle Ages."

"There seems to be more rain this summer. What do you think about climate change?"

"I've also seen the film '...'. I loved it. What did you think about the story?"

"You're from Britain. Do you know Manchester? I'm a great fan of Manchester United – but why is hooliganism such a problem?"

"My husband works for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs so I often meet foreigners, but I have never been abroad. What do you like about China?"

"How can I get to Xi'an, do you know? I really want to see the Terracotta Army for myself one day."

Coming to an End

Especially at a party, people often want to be able to circulate and not to talk to just one person no matter how interesting they are. It is best to wait until you have come to the natural end of the topic you are talking about before indicating that you are ready to move on.

"Well, it's been lovely talking with you. I hope we'll meet again."

"I must just try to catch a word with Please excuse me."

Or it may be that you want to be able to include someone else in your group.

"Do you know ...? We work together at Complex. XX, this is YY."

"We've been talking about What do you think?"

Exercise

1. Names can sometimes be a problem. Think about how to spell your name in Pinyin in case you can't be understood.

"X-I-A-O H-U-A" "S-U-N J-I-E"

2. Think about how to explain exactly where your home town is.

"My hometown is Yulin. It's in Northern Shaanxi, about 600 kilometres south-west of Beijing."

"I was born in Shanghai. That's at the mouth of the Yangtze River, on the coast."

3. Think about how to explain what you do for a living.

"I'm personal assistant to the CEO of Complex Universal Systems. Complex is a computer software company which has offices in Shanghai, Guangzhou as well as Beijing."

"I work for CNOOC, the Chinese petrochemical company, in HR."

"I work for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the Cultural Exchange Department. My job involves liaising with foreign theatrical companies who want to come to China."

"I'm a doctor – paediatrics. I work mainly at the XYZ Hospital which is a general hospital in Nanjing city centre".

