

SPEECH COMMUNICATION

The Speechmaking Process

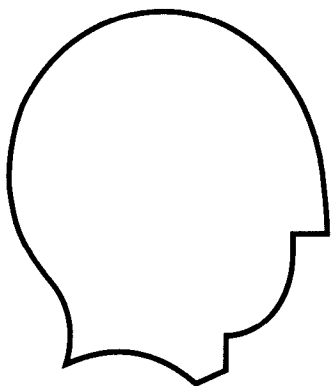
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RAYMOND S. ROSS



TENTH EDITION



SPEECH COMMUNICATION

The Speechmaking Process

RAYMOND S. ROSS

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An Instructor's Manual with the usual ancillaries plus extensive pedagogical notes is available from the publisher or sales representative.



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PREFACE

The most important educational goals of this book are:

1. To help students become critical thinkers, organizers, and effective ethical purveyors of informative and persuasive messages.
2. To help students learn that receivers are coactive participants in the communication process who affectively, cognitively, and/or behaviorally respond to messages.
3. To help students transfer the communication fundamentals learned from public speaking to all other forms of communication.

The more pragmatic objectives are implicit in Cicero's five essentials of public speaking:

1. Determining exactly what one intends to say.
2. Arranging the materials in a proper order with good judgment.
3. Selecting well-chosen words and carefully phrased sentences.
4. Fixing the speech in mind (practice).
5. Delivering it with dignity and grace.

Surveys of course content and student needs have guided the content decisions for most of this book. Its basic pedagogical assumption is that students are better served by a "theory and practice" approach rather than one that is all practice.

Speaking experience governed by theory, principle, and professional criticism should promote sound communication habits whatever the setting.

This, the 10th edition of *SPEECH COMMUNICATION*, is mostly informed by behavioral/cognitive theory and research. While reflecting the social cognition emphasis of the 90s, its rhetorical roots are evident in its treatment of models, ethics, and practice.

These generalizations from process to practice, whether cast as rules or laws, have been simplified to facilitate understanding and application. The "content" chapters are leaner than in previous editions but still strive to teach students more than skills alone.

I'm pleased that "critical thinking" scholars identify core thinking skills that are very similar to what this book is all about: organizing, outlining, information gathering, goal setting, analysis, reasoning, and effective communication. The theory chapters plus classroom applications are designed to lead to still richer critical thinking and speaking skills.

I would like to acknowledge the reviewers whose helpful comments contributed to the tenth edition: Daniel J. Perkins, University of Wisconsin; Kathryn Duguay, North Adams State College; and Kay M. Robinson, Bemidji State University.

RSR

P.S. Please ask my publisher or your sales representative to provide you with the new *Instructor's Manual*. It has all the usual ancillaries plus extensive pedagogical notes.

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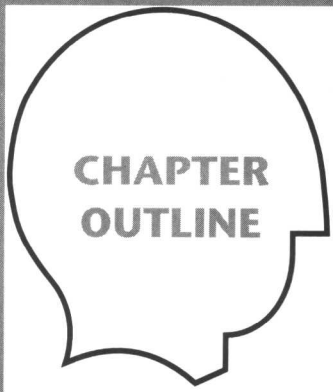
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1

PUBLIC SPEAKING AND THE COMMUNICATION PROCESS



CHAPTER OUTLINE

The Importance of Public Speaking in Society
The Speech Communication Process
Speaker Integrity
Speaking with Confidence
Summary
Learning Projects
Notes

THE IMPORTANCE OF PUBLIC SPEAKING IN SOCIETY

Why study public speaking? Listen to Roderick P. Hart, distinguished Professor of Communication and Government at the University of Texas:

... nobody should be deprived of power, security, or beauty simply because they cannot share their ideas with others or vent their feelings in socially useful ways. Those who fought against the Enlightenment—the then-guarantors of temporal force, religious intolerance, and ethnocentric prejudice—must never again be allowed to dictate our students' social and political standings. Communication skill itself must become the New Guarantor of the Good.¹

Why study public speaking? A dozen or more occupations have a direct interest in public speaking. The “people professions”—law, teaching, public relations, advertising, health care, management, criminal justice, sales—could just as well be called the “communication professions.”

The most important thing I learned in school was how to communicate.

Lee Iacocca

It has been estimated that there are over 3,000 speaking platforms on any given day in Los Angeles alone, 30,000 in Chicago, and 50,000 in New York. These include Rotary Clubs, universities, women's groups, church groups, and conventions. In today's golden age of the lecture business, Notre Dame football coach Lou Holtz and motivational speaker Tony Robbins command fees of \$20,000 to \$75,000 per appearance. Ralph Nader earns \$800,000 a year speaking. Who says talk is cheap?

Approximately 60,000 conventions or major meetings are held each year in hundreds of cities across America. Many of these gatherings include intelligent, entertaining, or humorous paid presentations. Add to this, unpaid speeches (for example, over 1,500 program participants at the yearly Speech Communication Association convention), and the numbers grow quickly. Do real people ever give speeches?

A survey of the speaking habits of 478 adults in the Albany-Schenectady-Troy (New York) area revealed that (1) between 55 percent and 63 percent of these adults gave at least one speech in the past two years to ten or more people, with 71 percent of these speakers giving at least four speeches during that time; (2) people are more likely to give job-related speeches, and these speeches are the informative and persuasive type; and (3) people with more education and income give speeches the most frequently.² Knowing this last connection, a person who wants a high-income job would be wise to get a good education and prepare to speak well. Obviously this is a skill you may need.

Still think it isn't important? In a Michigan poll, 500 adults were asked: "What most influences your decisions about political candidates?" The respondents put party affiliation first, *speaking ability* second, appearance or good looks third, age fourth, race or ethnic background fifth, and the person's sex last. One would hope that honesty, issues, and intelligence might have been mentioned more often . . . but speaking ability is clearly critical.

We really are big talkers! A recent survey of college graduates indicated that they speak to an audience of ten or more people an average of fifty-two times in a two-year period.³

Are students any good at this important oral skill? Dr. David Adamany, a university president, thinks not:

It has become increasingly clear that students are significantly deficient in their ability to make oral presentations. Yet this skill has become steadily more important in a world which requires collaboration between specialists in widely varying fields and in which communications technology—by telephone, television and audiovisual tapes—implicates the ability to make effective oral presentations. Contrary to some journalistic assertions, a technological age heightens the need for human collaboration—and thus for effective oral communication—rather than diminishing it I ask the commission to consider how the university might improve the ability of students to make oral presentations, which is certainly one of the basic skills required of most educated persons.

David Adamany, President, Wayne State University

The University of Colorado faculty and students across the curriculum agree. Survey data make clear that both groups feel that students are deficient in the following:

1. Expressing ideas clearly
2. Organizing messages
3. Expressing ideas concisely
4. Using evidence
5. Use of speaking voice
6. Anxiety control
7. Listening effectively⁴

A national assessment of speaking skills suggests that the skills of 15 to 20 percent of our 21- to 25-year-olds may be described as inadequate.⁵

What do business leaders think? Consider this statement from a human resources manager for 5,000 people at Unisys Corporation:

We have some of the most successful technical gurus who find it difficult to make oral presentations.

Linda Huebscher, Unisys Corporation⁶

The national call for students to improve their critical thinking relates directly to the concepts covered in this text. “. . . we are teaching far more than a set of skills to use to affect others. We are also teaching structures for thinking.”⁷ The interaction between how we speak and how we think is a compelling reason for learning and applying the lessons in your public speaking course.

Research shows that you can improve your speech skills significantly by taking a speech course.⁸ Moreover, testimonials by successful individuals have affirmed the value of speech training, and research has indicated its usefulness to you in better understanding your other university courses.

Modern technology often makes speech preparation and critical thinking unusually important. In one case reported by New York state occupational education czar Willard Daggett, a speech was in IBM hard copy transcripts within 90 seconds of its completion—and *simultaneously translated into four different languages*. We’ll have more to say about critical thinking in the chapters that follow.

THE SPEECH COMMUNICATION PROCESS

When asked to define communication, many people reply that it is the transfer of meaning from one mind to another. This definition implies that an idea is some kind of an object, but what does an idea look like?



Figure 1.1 What does an idea look like?

We can transfer an *object*—a brick, a chair, a dog bone—from one place to another, but don’t *ideas* in some way already have to be at the destination?

Most speech teachers today believe that this transfer notion is not really true and that it may actually hinder the learning of more specific skills that must be acquired. Ideas and thoughts are energizers of a very complex human communication process within a still more complex social system.

Communication involves common experience and *mutual* influence. Real communication is very difficult if there is not at least some small opportunity for two-way influence. Whether we know it or not, we communicate hoping to influence others to respond as we want them to. This process is ever-changing, dynamic, and mutual.

Although it is impossible to separate the parts of so integrated a process, for our purposes it may be helpful to divide it arbitrarily into a sequence of events. Let's assume we have a message (which might be referred to as an *idea* or *concept* or *meaning*) that we wish to convey to another person. Our brain now sorts through our storehouse of knowledge, experience, feelings, and previous training to select and refine the precise meaning we are seeking to communicate. Before we transmit this meaning, we *encode* it; we put it into signs and symbols that we commonly think of as *language*. (Gesture, facial expression, and tone of voice may also be considered signs, symbols, or codes.)

The way in which the message is coded, the medium or channel chosen for its transmission, and the skill with which it is transmitted influence the meaning it will have for the receiver. Assuming that the medium for this illustration is simply the air between the speaker and the listener, we now have the encoded message, its transmission, and its reception by the other person. The listener then *decodes* the signal, or at least attempts to decode it. The listener sorts out, selects, and elicits meanings from his or her storehouse of knowledge, experience, and training until there has been created in his or her mind a replica of the images and ideas contained in the mind of the sender. However, if the signal is in a code with which the listener is not familiar, such as a foreign language, not much communication will take place.

To the extent that the listener's replica is similar to the sender's images and ideas, we have achieved communication. The idea, concept, or meaning in the mind of the listener is therefore very dependent upon the knowledge and experience he or she can apply to the code. The value of knowing your listeners now becomes evident. Because all of this sharing implies intention, perhaps one *can* "not communicate"—at least where poor speechmaking is involved.⁹ The *thoughts* you are trying to communicate and provoke are the principal energizers of the speechmaking process. They are the fuel that makes a serious communication possible. However, like a car with a full gas tank, it will not go far if the subsystems fail or if the fuel was watered down in the first place.

Thus our working definition of intentional communication is: *a complex process of skillfully sharing, selecting, and sorting ideas, symbols, signs, and delivery methods designed to help listeners elicit from their own minds a meaning or*

effect similar to that intended by the speaker. We now see why seemingly obvious meanings (in *our* minds) are often distorted or misunderstood by others. Perhaps this is what is meant by the old saying, "One cannot teach a person what that person does not already know," and perhaps this better explains the old teaching rule, "Go from the known to the unknown."

Figure 1.2 shows a model that focuses on human *sign-symbol behavior*. In interpreting this model, remember that we are capable of being both sender and receiver at the same time; we are, one might say, *transceivers*.

The frame of the model shows the world in which this communication takes place. It suggests the importance of *situation*, *mood*, *context*, and *psychological climate*. The *situation* could range from a speech to a simple exchange of information. **Mood** refers to feelings of the moment. At different times your mood might be happy, angry, tense, and so on. Your mood can greatly affect what you say or hear and how you say or hear something. **Context** is the framework of other words or ideas into which yours fit. If you are talking about paper, note how the word changes in these contexts: The paper

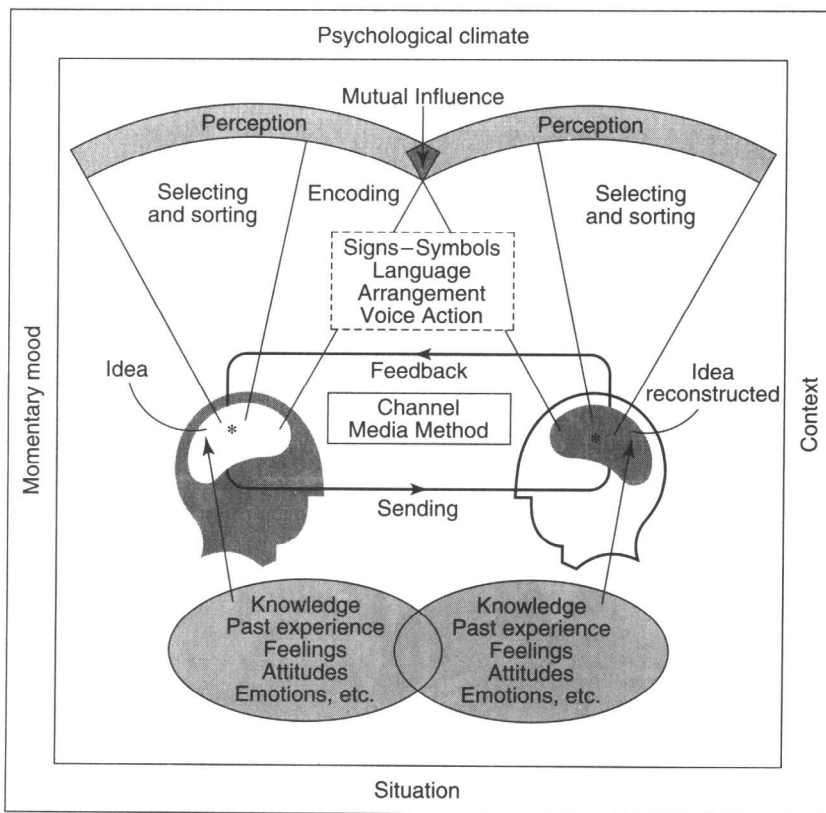


Figure 1.2 Communication process model