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Speaking for Success

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为成功而演讲

Speaking for Success

中国日报社《21世纪报》编

 上海外语教育出版社
外教社 SHANGHAI FOREIGN LANGUAGE EDUCATION PRESS

图书在版编目(CIP)数据

为成功而演讲 / 策划: 黄庆 齐琦. - 上

海: 上海外语教育出版社, 2005

ISBN 7-81095-615-9

I. 为… II. ①黄… ②齐… III. 英语

- 演讲 - 文集 IV. H311.9-53

中国版本图书馆 CIP 数据核字 (2005) 第 019860 号

出版发行: 上海外语教育出版社

(上海外国语大学内) 邮编: 200083

电 话: 021-65425300 (总机)

电子邮箱: bookinfo@sflep.com.cn

网 址: <http://www.sflep.com.cn> <http://www.sflep.com>

责任编辑: 徐国华

印 刷: 上海华业装璜印刷厂

经 销: 新华书店上海发行所

开 本: 850×1168 1/32 印张 11.625 字数 290 千字

版 次: 2005 年 3 月第 1 版 2005 年 9 月第 2 次印刷

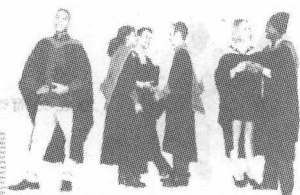
印 数: 5 000 册

书 号: ISBN 7-81095-615-9 / G · 335

定 价: 18.00 元

本版图书如有印装质量问题, 可向本社调换

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演讲与成功

中国日报社 黄 庆

常听人说学英语难,讲英语难。真的那么难吗?

读完这本书,你也许会改变看法。这本书记录了一群年轻人用英语演讲的成功之路。他们是第一至第九届“21 世纪杯”全国英语演讲比赛的优胜者,他们的故事是成功的故事。他们用自己的亲身经历和体会告诉读者,讲英语不是不难,但你可以使它变为不难;用英语演讲,也许很难,但你也有可能使它变为熟练的技能。

一

从敏于观察、勤于归纳、点滴积累,到重在参与、挑战自我,这些优胜者讲述的是他们学习英语的历程,其中的艰辛和考验,荣誉和乐趣,都给我们带来无穷的遐想,我在欣赏他们的故事中读他们的叙述。我相信我们的读者也会和我一样,在阅读中欣赏。当然,我很欣喜,这些参赛者没有把参加演讲比赛仅仅看作是语言的游戏,比赛的过程还是他们思想的碰撞、心灵的提升。通过比赛,他们收获颇丰。更可贵的是,有的参赛者还提到,比赛的经常化有助于国家的民主建设。爱国之心,报国之情,让我感动。所有这些,都超越了当年我们设计比赛时的预期。

话说一九九五年,因为办英文报的原因,中国日报和西方世界多了一些接触。由于经常接触,我们体会到发达国家不但媒体发达,oral tradition 同样发达。发达的媒体加上发达的 oral

tradition,形成西方的话语优势,这就是他们国家的软国力优势。对年轻一代来说,软国力优势既可以成为优良的传统,又是宝贵的遗产。《中国日报》作为媒体,我们常问这样的问题:应该为国家的软国力做些什么?在一次外事活动中,当时的英国驻华大使夫人 Lady Appleyard 同我们谈起英语演讲。于是,一个创意诞生了。那就是我们可以组织英语演讲,让中国的学生参加国际上的比赛,把他们带入国际舞台,在新世纪即将到来和新世纪时代为我们的学生,为我们的学校,为我们的教育,增加一些知识财富、经验财富和智力财富,为增强软国力做点贡献。

从那年起,我们每年选择一个演讲比赛主题,原则是这些主题都必须和学生有关。无论是关于如何迎接新世纪,如何面对两种文化的冲撞,如何寻求人与自然的和谐发展,还是关于探讨成功的定义,申奥的含义,全球化的挑战与机遇,学术教育的诚信,等等,这些主题无一例外都和中国大学生有关,在每次比赛中这些主题也都得到了选手们精彩的回应。

我们深切地体会到,随着改革开放的不断深入,中国大学生在变,中国大学在变,十年大赛见证了中国学生和学校的变化历史。我们的比赛活动,受到全国各高校的重视。有的高校已将演讲作为教学内容,使其成为学校英语学习的常态。随着比赛的深入,选手的平均水平逐年提高,不断有我们大赛的优胜者在国际比赛中获奖的好消息。同时,我们历届选手也开始逐步踏上美好的人生。喜讯频频传来,我们感到非常欣慰和兴奋。

二

作为主办方,《中国日报》以开放的心态,每年邀请国际评委和中国评委一起做评判。来自英、美、澳等国的国际评委和我们中国的评委们,个个都是英语语言交际和传播方面的专家学者。我们的每届比赛,都得到这些评委,尤其是国际评委的高度好评。美国



威斯康辛大学教授 Stephen E. Lucas 是演讲艺术的专家,名下的专著更是许多大学的教科书。在参与了两届“21 世纪杯”演讲比赛后,这位教授在他新版专著中也包含了我们的比赛内容,把它们写进书中。这次我们非常高兴他能拨冗专门为本书撰写了一部分有关演讲艺术和技巧的内容。正如他所述,演讲的技能实际上就是能在日常各种环境中轻松和有效地与人交流的技能。这要求人们能独立思考,并能在此基础上将自己的主张清楚有力地、前后一致地表达并坚持。

我们也非常感谢优胜者的指导老师及有关学校。在这本书中,还有这些指导老师的代表所撰写的经验和点评。我很赞同上海外国语大学梅德明教授的观点:“全国英语演讲比赛不仅仅是口才的比拼,更是心才的较量,同时也是人才的展示。”

我们愿意相信,演讲比赛造就的不仅仅是一批人才,而且是一种可能,一个平台。这种可能使所有心想者都得到提高,包括此书的读者;这个平台给所有参与者提供机会,包括成功的机会。

二〇〇五年元月

Speaking for Success

Stephen E. Lucas

The *21st Century Cup* National English Speaking Competition provides an excellent chance for you to learn, practice, and refine your skills of public speaking. Long after the competition is over, you will continue to benefit from the opportunity to prepare and present a speech. Whatever career you pursue, you will almost certainly need strong public speaking skills. As one business leader has stated, if you want to get to the top of your profession, you must have “the ability to stand on your feet, either on a one-to-one basis or before a group, and make a presentation that is convincing and believable.”

Globalization has put even greater demand on the need for public speaking ability in China, as has the selection of China to host the 2008 Olympic Games. As you develop your skills of public speaking — in the competition and beyond — you will find that you are increasingly able to use English as a working language. Having command of a language at this level is not just a matter of technical proficiency — of mastering vocabulary tests, practicing pronunciation drills, or memorizing rules of grammar. Rather, it is a matter of being able to use the language effortlessly and effectively in the full range of communication situations encountered on a daily basis in business, government, and education. These situations require people to think on their feet, to present and defend their ideas clearly, coherently, and convincingly. In addition to being



important to you as an individual, success in these situations will be vital to China as it competes with other nations of the world in the twenty-first century.

My purpose in this essay is to provide guidance that will help you prepare for the *21st Century Cup*. I will illustrate key points with examples from speeches presented during past competitions. As you read, however, keep in mind that the principles of public speaking discussed here will also be applicable on many occasions after college as you work and live in a globalized world. We will begin by looking at the content, structure, and language of an effective speech. We will then turn to speech delivery and to methods of dealing with stage fright. Finally, we will provide tips for impromptu speaking and for question-and-answer sessions.

Content

Content refers to the ideas you are trying to communicate and the manner in which you develop and support those ideas. Content is the most important part of any public speech. Judges in the *21st Century Cup* are looking for meaningful ideas and thoughtful analysis. As with any audience, they will appreciate humor and other clever touches, but they will focus above all on the substance of your speech. If you want to be successful, pay attention to developing a strong and distinctive message that will help you stand out from the other competitors.

When you begin working on your prepared speech, take a look at the booklets that contain speeches from previous contests. Doing so will help you understand the kinds of messages that have appealed to the judges in past years. In addition, keep the theme of the current competition in mind when you read newspapers, magazines, and the Internet. As

you read, ask yourself what are the important issues of the day? What are the challenges facing China and the world? How do these issues and challenges relate to the theme of the competition? Finally, think about your personal experiences that relate to this year's theme. You might be able to draw upon those experiences in developing your speech.

As you develop your speech, identify two or three main points that you want to communicate to your audience. State those points as clearly as you can and back them up with evidence. Careful listeners — such as the judges in the speech competition — will pay close attention to how you support your ideas. Using evidence is not a matter of haphazardly tossing facts and figures into your speech. Rather, it involves making careful decisions about which ideas need to be supported and doing research to find materials that will convey your thoughts clearly and creatively. As you do research for your speech, keep an eye out for three major types of supporting materials — examples, statistics, and testimony.

Examples

Examples are specific cases that illustrate or represent a group of people, ideas, conditions, experiences, or the like. Research has shown that vivid, concrete examples have strong impact on listeners' beliefs and actions. Without examples, ideas often seem vague, impersonal, and lifeless. With examples, ideas become specific, personal, and lively.

Examples can be either brief or extended. Often you can use several brief examples in succession to illustrate a point, as did Hou Xuewei of East China Normal University to show the appeal of Western culture for Chinese college students:

Look at ourselves, my fellow students. We love to eat



KFC's and McDonald's rather than Chinese dumpling; we love to drink Coca-Cola rather than tea; we love to see Hollywood's rather than domestic movies. Even some youngsters pay more attention to celebrating Christmas than Spring Festival.

Of course, there are also many brief examples that could be used to show the appeal of Chinese culture in other nations. Here is how Wang Zhiyu, from Shenzhen University, used such examples to support her claim that China's 5,000-year-culture has vigor and vitality in today's globalized world:

Japanese businessmen have already applied the Confucian ethics in their business management, and the American Military Academy, West Point, has taken Sunzi's *The Art of War* as one of their textbooks. In these years, the cream of our culture, such as traditional medical science and medicine, acupuncture, Tai Ji, paper cutting, has gradually won popularity in the world.

As their name implies, extended examples are longer and more detailed than brief examples. By telling a story vividly and dramatically, they pull listeners into the speech. Sun Yan, a student at Fudan University, used a poignant extended example to illustrate the spirit of the Olympic Games:

In the history of the Olympic Games, there have been many shining stars. Among them was a European girl. With the lapse of time, her name has faded from memory, yet her unbending spirit shall never perish. It was she who highlighted the Olympic creed.

In lead though she had been, she stumbled near the



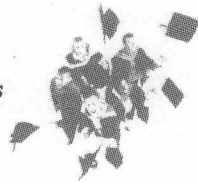
terminus and her leg was injured. Competitors passed her from behind in succession until finally only her weak and lonely figure remained on the track. Doctors came and offered to take her away. Yet she refused. With the only strength left in her, she managed to get up and shuffled feebly to the endpoint with drops of blood along her trail.

But cheers broke out. Though she failed in the race, the girl won the applause from people all over the world. It was she who elucidated the Olympic creed of participation. It was she who instilled perseverance in our mind.

This extended example captures vividly the courage of the Olympic runner and her personification of the Olympic spirit. Sun Yan could have said, "Olympic athletes display great fortitude," but the story makes her point far more vividly.

Here is another extended example. It was used by Liu Xunying of Shanghai Jiaotong University in the 2000 competition on "My Definition of Success":

Success also demands tolerance and stamina. Yuan Longping, the world-renowned Chinese expert in biological genetic engineering, never stopped his research work on hybrid rice even during the oppressive era of the Cultural Revolution. Many times his experimental facilities were seriously damaged and he himself intimidated to drop his work. Yet he never faltered. People continued to see him in the sweltering heat attentively examining every booming rice here. He pressed on until his toil and tolerance eventually led to a breakthrough. Today his success is vital to China in producing more food to feed her huge population.



Not only does this example illustrate the importance of perseverance to success, but it adds human interest and makes the speech more interesting for listeners. This is one reason why accomplished speakers consider extended examples “the very life of the speech.”

When presenting an extended example, make sure it does not go on too long. Otherwise, it may overpower your point and confuse listeners about your message. Also beware of the tendency to overuse extended examples. If your speech consists of little more than a series of extended examples, it will probably not be as well received by the judges as a speech that combines examples with other kinds of evidence.

Statistics

We live in an age of statistics. Day in and day out we are bombarded with a staggering array of numbers. The population of China is more than 1.3 billion persons and growing. Russia produces about 333 million gallons of vodka annually. The adult literacy rate in Brazil is 83 percent. Each year 20 million people around the globe die from starvation or starvation-related causes.

Because of the complexity of the modern world, we often feel more secure in our knowledge when we can express it numerically. Examples can bring a problem alive and dramatize it in human terms, but listeners may still wonder how many people the problem affects. In such a situation, you should turn to statistics. Research has shown that the impact of examples is greatly enhanced when they are combined with statistics that show the examples are not atypical.

Like brief examples, statistics are often cited in passing to clarify or strengthen a speaker's point. They can also be used in combination — stacked up to show the magnitude or seriousness

of an issue. Here is how Liang Meng of Tsinghua University used statistics to show the importance of tourism to China's economy:

China's tourism revenue last year reached 500 billion RMB, an increase of 10.5 percent from the year before, and comprised more than 5 percent of China's GDP. According to experts, this number will grow to 8 percent in the coming ten years and more than 40 million jobs will be created.

This is a well-supported argument. But what if Liang Meng had merely said: Tourism in China continues to show steady signs of growth.

The second statement is neither as clear nor as convincing as the one containing statistics. The statistics make Liang Meng's claim credible and specific.

Similarly, Qi Yue, from Beijing Language and Culture University, cited a string of statistics to support her claim that the 2008 Olympic Games will be a green Olympics. She said:

According to a project entitled "The Green Olympic Action Plan," between 1998 and 2007, in Beijing we [will] have invested 100 billion RMB in preserving and protecting the environment. Some 12.5 million trees and over 1 million acres of grass will be planted along the Fourth Ring Road. By then, the city's green area will make up 40 percent of its total.

As helpful as statistics can be, nothing bores an audience more than a speech cluttered with numbers from beginning to end. To be most effective, statistics should be used sparingly.



Insert them only when they are needed to make your point, and then make sure they are easy for the audience to grasp. It is also important to make sure your statistics are unbiased and come from reliable sources. As Qi Yue did in her speech, you should cite the sources of your statistics so the audience will be able to judge their accuracy and reliability.

Testimony

You can also support your ideas by using testimony — statements from people who have special knowledge or experience on the topic of your speech. The two major types of testimony are expert testimony and peer testimony.

Expert testimony comes from people who are acknowledged authorities in their fields. Such testimony is especially valuable for student speakers because they are seldom recognized as experts on their speech topics. Citing the views of highly respected figures is a good way to lend credibility to your speeches. It shows that your opinions are supported by people of knowledge and insight.

Peer testimony comes not from scholars, philosophers, and other recognized experts, but from ordinary people who have firsthand experience on the topic. This kind of testimony is valuable because it conveys the feelings, the knowledge, the insight of people who speak with the voice of genuine experience.

Whichever kind of testimony you use, it is an excellent way to strengthen the content of your speech. Consider the following excerpt from the presentation by Zhan Cheng of Guangdong University of Foreign Studies at the 1999 competition. In supporting his claim that it is necessary to maintain a balance between people and nature, he stated:

Fortunately, we Chinese people have a fine tradition of cherishing nature. The great philosopher and educator Confucius once said, “The will of heaven means the order of nature and the truth means to follow the order of nature, and man should never be separated from the truth.”

By quoting Confucius, Zhan Cheng made his position more acceptable by showing its consistency with the teachings of one of China’s most revered figures.

Speaking in 2001, Li Beidi, a student at the University of International Business and Economics, used a quotation from an astronaut to emphasize the importance of peace and friendship among nations:

An astronaut once said: “From the spaceship I looked at our globe, so lovely and peaceful like a sleeping baby. Suddenly, I felt the impulse to ask myself: Where are the national boundaries? Why couldn’t I see them? Then the answer dawned upon me: When God created human beings, he never divided them by drawing any lines. It is people who keep themselves apart by wars and confrontations.”

This quotation was effective because it was perfectly suited to the speaker’s point and stated the point more eloquently than the speaker could have in her own words.

As with statistics, you should use testimony only from qualified, unbiased sources whose words and opinions will be seen as trustworthy. You should also identify the people you quote or paraphrase. This is important for two reasons. First, it will make your speech more persuasive by showing why the