Public Speaking and the New Oratory

A Guide for Non-native Speakers

Fiona Rossette-Crake

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Cover illustration: Django/ Getty Images

For my father, the speech writer,
and my mother, the performer

Preface

The first two decades of the twenty-first century have ushered in a new age of oral communication. New forms of public speaking have emerged such as TED talks, corporate keynotes, sales pitches or three-minute-thesis presentations. In 2007, in his most famous keynote, Steve Jobs exemplified the presentation style he had been developing over previous years when he presented the first iPhone.

These different forms share key characteristics. For example, gone is the pulpit: the speaker no longer reads from a script; rather, she/he stands on a bare stage and speaks to a slide presentation. As well, these forms all mark a move towards more casual, friendly language that simulates spontaneity, while at the same time creating dramatic, staged moments thanks notably to rhetorical figures belonging to the classical oratory canon—a balance not so easy to strike. And the development of these new forms is intrinsically linked to the digital revolution. Collectively, these speeches bring into sharp focus the renewed face of public speaking, forging what is qualified here as the New Oratory.

The new speech forms that underpin the New Oratory all hail from English-speaking countries. They are characteristic of Anglo-Saxon communication culture, which particularly fosters an individualistic, personal and visual style of address. In the global landscape, they are being adopted the world over, sometimes in the local language, but, more generally, directly in English. Three-minute-thesis and investor pitch competitions

are springing up in countless countries, as well as other clubs and federations, from Toastmasters and debating clubs, to Model United Nations, where students simulate debates in diplomacy. And this development comes at a time when public speaking has increasingly become a key competence in most areas of professional and social life. You no longer have to belong to the "speaker industry" (e.g. the sector of companies specialised in providing speakers and presenters for events) to need public speaking as a skill to be employable, a point underlined in the general media:

> [S]peaking and presentation skills matter well beyond the obvious fields of politics and the bar. They regularly come close to the top of employer wish lists when hiring and, if anything, matter more for the self-employed when pitching for work, money or just a higher profile in a world where the art of self-promotion is constantly evolving.[1]

Such enthusiasm informs the "talk renaissance" that we are currently experiencing—to borrow the words of Chris Anderson (2016)[2], head of TED talks. Similarly, academic and communications coach Max Atkinson (2004: 369)[3] talks about a "cultural revolution", noting that "[t]he climate is right for a wider cultural revolution aimed at […] a renewed confidence in the power of the spoken word".

While modern technology has engendered never-before *virtual, non-face-to-face* forms of communication, it is also playing a key role in promoting both old and new forms of *public* address—that is, speech recorded before a *live* audience. The situation is very different from that of 1988, when political communications specialist Kathleen Hall Jamieson wrote about the way the electronic media, television particularly, had sidelined speeches, resulting in the virtual extinction of eloquence and "fiery oratory", replaced by politicians "conversing" with a TV-viewing audience.[4] Characteristically, the New Oratory also enacts a "conversing" with the audience, but because of the attention paid to staging in front of a live audience, this is combined within a polished, upbeat performance.

The advent of online video has led to both an expansion of audiences and an expansion of speakers. In terms of audience, Internet users now have access to millions of speeches of various types that had previously been restricted to specific discourse communities. Now, Internet users can, for example, find themselves pseudo members of an audience of a

commencement address during a graduation ceremony at a US university, or in the audience of an investor pitch competition during a Start-up weekend. Alternatively, they can become one amongst the crowd at a company shareholder meeting.

In terms of speakers, a major change is that *public* speaking is no longer restricted to *public* figures, mostly politicians. Speeches by Abraham Lincoln, Winston Churchill, John F. Kennedy and Martin Luther King made up the modern oratory canon of the English language. Now, actors from the corporate world, such as Steve Jobs, seem to provide the new benchmark, in an era when CEOs are called upon to play a far more prominent role in their company's communication. At the same time, in the case of speeches like TED talks, the stage is being claimed by previously unknown individuals—"mostly people you have never heard of before"[5]—who are part of this new generation of "digital speakers".[6]

The aim of this book is to provide specific guidelines for the non-native speaker to address a public in English. It includes an appraisal of the New Oratory, and places it within the framework of the English-language oratory tradition, as well as the constraints of the specific communicational set-up that constitutes public address.

For the non-native speaker, addressing a public in English poses two types of challenges. The first challenge is linguistic: speakers need to grasp forms of language that lend themselves to a context of oral monologue. Despite the many communication guides and public speaking manuals that are available, this aspect—how to *script the speech*—is not dealt with directly to cater for the non-native speaker.

Public speaking, particularly in its new forms, poses the more general challenge of communicational competence, underpinned by cultural and generic constraints that are both linguistic and paralinguistic in nature. Taking the floor in English requires an understanding of the cultural implications of the choices of the speaker. It also requires the speaker to be sensitive to constraints that are specific to each type of speech. The other main aim of this book is therefore to tackle these issues pertaining to communicational competence which also play a decisive role in the scripting of each specific speech.

Because they shed light on linguistic choices, issues relating to communication competence serve as a point of departure for this book (Cf.

Part I). Discussion is inspired by insights from the fields of discourse analysis, as well as from systemic functional grammar, particularly its description of the link between language choice and context, and the differences between spoken and written language.

Language choices are dealt with directly in Parts II and III of this book. Emphasis is placed on how to produce/script a speech that *stages an interaction* with the audience (Part II), as well as a speech which is *listenable* thanks to clear *structuring signalled in the language* (Part III). Examples are taken from a variety of speeches, those belonging to both the New Oratory and more classical genres, including political speeches. The New Oratory is embedded in a strong English-language speech tradition, and marks a continuation of rather than a departure from this tradition.

Finally, Part IV focuses on the New Oratory. We will look closely at three exemplary genres: three-minute thesis presentations, investor pitches and TED talks, before discussing what they all have in common. These genres provide contemporary examples of phenomena discussed throughout the book. They also provide cases in point that illustrate the need to keep genre and cultural constraints foremost in our minds when approaching the exercise of public speaking in the world in which we now live.

Nanterre, France   Fiona Rossette-Crake

Notes

1. Hinsliff, G. "How to be Heard: the Art of Public Speaking", *The Guardian*, October 21, 2018, retrieved from https://www.theguardian.com/lifeand-style/2018/oct/21/art-of-speaking-up-for-yourself.
2. Anderson, C. (2016). *TED Talks: The Official TED Guide to Public Speaking*. Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.
3. Atkinson, M. (2004) *Lend Me Your Ears*. London: Random House.
4. Hall Jamieson, K. (1984) *Eloquence in an Electronic Age: The Transformation of Political Speechmaking*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
5. Rose, C. "TED Talks", 60 Minutes, April 19, 2015, retrieved from https://www.cbsnews.com/news/ted-talks-60-minutes-charlie-rose/.
6. Hickman, A. "Conference Speakers and the Digital Revolution", published online on April 19, 2017: https://www.jla.co.uk/conference-speakers-digital-revolution/#.XFvzCc17lPb.

Contents

List of Figures

List of Tables

Part I

Speaking in English: Getting Started

1

An Anglo-Saxon Ethos

1   Anglo Communication Culture and Its Weight in the World Today

What Is Anglo Communication Culture?

Anglo communication culture is defined by the cultural critic Deborah Cameron (2005) as "a permanent quest for authentic, integrated and presentable selves". This is particularly the case in oral communication, especially the new forms of public speaking that have emerged in the first quarter of the twenty-first century. Indeed, one of their trademarks is the way the spotlight is placed on the very person of the speaker. As speakers, we are called upon to speak in our own name and express our own viewpoint. This is illustrated in the following example, transcribed from a keynote delivered by Tim Cook, CEO of Apple:

> we created Everyone Can Code, with free teaching and learning resources so that everyone can learn to code. It's been so successful it's now available to tens of millions of students around the world. Just imagine what this new generation of coders will create. Whatever it is, I'm sure that it's going to change the world. (Tim Cook, CNBC keynote, June 4, 2018)[1]

The last sentence—"I'm sure that it's going to change the world"—not only expresses a personal stance by the speaker but also presents the speaker as someone who is invested in a mission and motivated by a noble cause. According to the definition adopted above, a speaker needs to come across as "integrated and presentable"—that is, as a decent and coherent human being. This is what guarantees the trust of the audience.

Of course, creating trust and empathy with the audience has always been an essential part of rhetoric. However, it is amplified in Anglo-Saxon culture by the way speakers not only virtually take a moral stand (cf. "changing the world"), but also adopt a speaking persona that is likeable and friendly. They foster a "nice guy" ethos, that is to say the image she/he gives of himself/herself (see below).

A friendly persona generally coincides with a relatively casual speaking manner and use of language forms that are typical of casual conversation. In addition, it is important to appear to engage with the audience and simulate a dialogue with them. This is achieved thanks to language that involves the listener, such as the imperative form used by Cook: "*Just imagine* what this new generation of coders will create."

Importantly, these features of Anglo communication culture are adopted by non-native speakers when they deliver a speech in English. Here are two extracts from speeches. The first was given by Jack Ma, the Chinese business man who founded Alibaba, the Chinese sales platform, who addresses European business and political leaders. The second was given by a foreign PhD student studying in Australia, who explains his PhD research during a three-minute-thesis presentation:

> We are at a great time of innovation, inspiration, invention and creativity. And I think everybody is working hard, trying to realize their dreams. […] And I strongly believe it's not the technology that changes the world, it is the dreams behind the technology that changes the world. (Jack Ma, Pasifika Haina bridge conference, Germany, 2015)[2]
>
> Hello everyone. Today I'm going to talk about a part of your body that I'm sure, before coming here, you had not thought about as important in your daily life: the elbow joint. According to the literature, it is the most important joint of your upper extremity. Think about how hard your life would be if you did not have a properly functional elbow joint. (Munsur Rahman, three-minute-thesis presentation, University of Queensland, 2017)[3]

These extracts contain the expression of personal stance: "And *I think* everybody is working hard [...]", "And *I strongly believe* [...]" (Jack Ma); "*I'm sure* [...] you had not thought about [...]" (Munsur Rahman). In addition, they adopt language that is typical of casual conversation, such as the conversation opener "Hello everyone" used above by the PhD student Munsur Rahman, which involves the listener thanks to the inclusive pronoun "we", for example "*We* are at a great time of innovation [...]" (Jack Ma) or, again, thanks to the imperative form, for example "*Think about* how hard your life would be if you did not have a properly functional elbow joint" (Munsur Rahman).

What we also need to take into account are the conditions of delivery and the way the speech is staged. In the new speaking formats of the New Oratory, which all originate from Anglo-Saxon countries, the speaker's body appears in the frontline. Just like the speakers quoted above, orators no longer hide behind a pulpit. They appear on a bare stage, in full view of the audience, against the backdrop of a now quasi-compulsory slide presentation.

Anglo Communication Culture and the Global, Digital Age

Successful public speaking in English is therefore not just about finding the right words and using the correct grammar. It also requires an awareness and mastery of the specific cultural conventions that come into play. In fact, as the new formats of the New Oratory are being adopted the world over, and sometimes in the local language, some of the features outlined above are now being adopted in speeches delivered in languages other than English. One example of this are TEDx conferences organised in non-English-speaking countries: when the talk is given in the language of the host country, it nevertheless reproduces to a tee TED's characteristic formatting and language choices, which are a product of Anglo communication culture.

Of course, major cultural differences exist within the English-speaking world, and it would be wrong to place on a par the American and British cultures, or those of other English-speaking countries (e.g. Australia).[4]

When we talk about Anglo communication culture, it is generally the American variant that we have in mind, due to the influence of American culture, particularly corporate culture. And a clear link can be established between the individualistic values informing the Anglo-Saxon model of capitalism and the focus on the personal that is culturally specific.

A recent variant of American corporate culture is that provided by the start-up generation of entrepreneurs. In the global, digital age, where personal branding is more than a buzzword, communication is very much about taking a personal stand. For example, engineers no longer simply design and manufacture new products, but are called upon to play a personal role in their financing and marketing. In this case, they sell not just the product but themselves. They are the guarantor of the product. And in the new digital landscape, it is, to quote the head of TED talks, Chris Anderson (2016), the "human overlay" provided by an in-the-flesh speaker that puts oral presentations ahead of other types of mass communication.

However, adopting a personal voice can prove a problem for non-native speakers who come from a cultural background where it is not the norm to speak in their own name. In Anglo-Saxon countries, pupils at primary school through to students at university are generally encouraged to give various types of oral presentations, participate in debating tournaments, and so on, where ideas are discussed and debated at a personal, individual level. In contrast, in the French education system for example, rhetoric and the expression of personal ideas have traditionally been developed via writing exercises, which remain "academic and technical" instead of being "professional and personal" (Chaplier and O'Connell 2015).

In some cultures, the opportunity to speak in public is not open to everyone. For example, in some American Indian communities, only male elders are entitled to endorse the role of orator (Carbaugh 2005). They provide examples of cultures that promote a "norm of authority", as opposed to the "norm of authenticity" that informs Anglo-Saxon culture (Boromisza-Habashi et al. 2016: 28–29). People from cultures that promote a norm of authority hold distance and objectivity in high esteem and place emphasis on "eloquence, tradition, authority, and community". They contrast with people from cultures that foster authenticity, which

"prompts the speaker not only to speak in an authentic manner but also to be the type of authentic person to whom the audience can easily relate". And over the past years, the norm of authenticity that epitomises Anglo-Saxon communication culture has been amplified, particularly if communication manuals are anything to go by. Manuals insist far more than in the past on the need to communicate by putting a personal slant on things and by building up a direct and intimate relationship with the audience (Sproule 2012).[5]

When taking the floor in English, you will appear more convincing when you display "cultural competence" and adopt what can be described as an "Anglo-Saxon" ethos.

2 Cultural Competence: Developing an "Anglo-Saxon" Ethos

Cultural Competence as Part of Communicational Competence

Communicational competence combines several types of competency:

– A linguistic competence, specific to the language itself (e.g. English);
– A cultural competence, specific to a culture—for example, Anglo-Saxon culture, American culture, and British culture;
– A generic competence, specific to the genre—for example, academic conference, political speech, three-minute-thesis presentation, investor pitch, and so on—which demonstrates compliance with the norms of the particular format at hand.

Cultural Competence

Culture is taken here in the wide sense, that is, as the construct based on values that are shared by members of a community which found their behaviour. Cultural competence is therefore concerned with the way you succeed in connecting with a specific community, in accordance with the

system of values and beliefs that underscore it, whether this coincides with a country, a language, a profession, a sector of business, and so on. In other words, a speaker is required to nurture a way of speaking that is expected within a given community.

Cultural differences have been widely observed in the most common form of oral communication: conversation. Conversation analysts have underlined variations depending on the given culture and language at many levels: for example, the way participants take turns to speak, how pauses are used and interpreted, differences in eye contact, physical distance between participants, ritual forms of greetings, and so on.

Similar cultural considerations come into play in the context of public speaking. However, a first aspect worth noting is the types of speeches and formats that are particularly favoured within a given culture. For instance, TED talks clearly promote speeches as a form of entertainment and in this they are representative of the American culture in which they emerged. More generally, Anglo-Saxon culture is well known for its tradition of "social and duty speeches" delivered at social occasions, such as weddings, birthdays, retirement parties, corporate Christmas parties, and so on.

Cultural factors also determine the speaker-audience relation and the role of the audience. A case in point is that of university lectures on the island of Java (reported in Boromisza-Habashi et al. 2016), where the behaviour of the audience can appear surprising and even impolite from the point of view of a Westerner: during the lecture, the students repeat out loud to one another the ideas that they have just heard and find pertinent, over the top of the voice of the teacher who continues to speak.

Culture also plays a stake in terms of format and content. One example is the range of rituals associated with speech openings and closings. Openings contain greetings and may or may not be accompanied by the expression of thanks. However, if you do not judge correctly whether or not thanks are expected and the form they should take, you will appear either impolite and ungracious on the one hand or subservient on the other (if, for instance, you labour the point for too long). Rituals associated with the end of speeches are also subject to variation, particularly in the political arena. A trademark of American politics is the formula "God

bless America" used at the end of ceremonial speeches. In other English-speaking countries, an equivalent expression would be unheard of.

One speech-opening strategy in English-speaking cultures is jokes. In many contexts, from politics to the workplace, jokes are used to lighten up the atmosphere, create complicity with the audience, and contribute to a friendly speaker ethos. But in cultures which foster authority and distance, jokes would be considered inappropriate.

Style of delivery is another area where cultural differences come to the fore. For instance, native English speakers will most likely avoid using a script, a difference that stands out at international academic conferences for example, where, in certain fields, academics from other backgrounds (e.g. French, German) often read a script word for word.

An "Anglo-Saxon" Ethos, or Speaking Personality

Cultural competence is therefore about adopting the appropriate "way of speaking" that is expected in the context. "Way of speaking" coincides with a modern meaning given to the concept of "ethos". This concept was originally developed in classical rhetoric but is an essential part of any instance of discourse production, whatever the medium.

One definition of ethos provided by Aristotle is the "*certain* light"[6] (my emphasis) in which speakers present themselves. Contemporary discourse analysis has taken up this aspect of ethos, which it qualifies as "a way of saying that reflects a way of being" (Maingueneau 1999). According to this definition, there is a tight link between the speech itself and the particular image it projects of the speaker. Ethos is also defined as "the self-image projected by a speaker aiming to influence the audience" (Amossy 2014). It is *a* way of saying/being: that is, *one* possible style/behaviour among others, that the speaker consciously adopts—and adapts—by gauging the necessities of the context at hand. This basically conflates with what the sociologist Erving Goffman (1959) describes as a speaking identity—or "speaking personality".

Speaking personality is projected through and by the speech itself—not only via the choice of words and content, but also via the type of relation the speaker establishes with the audience, as well as different

aspects of delivery: whether speakers read from a script or not (cf. Chap. 5), how they hold themselves and move on the stage, how they engage via eye contact, how they exploit vocal factors (intonation, word stress, pausing), and so on—in other words, how they *embody* their speech.

This aspect of ethos focuses on the important issues of how the speaker establishes credibility and gains the confidence of the audience. Gaining the audience's confidence plays an essential stake in speech openings, and is achieved by speakers in two main ways: (a) by indicating how their area of competency is linked to the subject of the speech; (b) by appearing sincere and worthy of confidence.[7] This latter aspect is also about displaying goodwill toward the audience—for example, by establishing some common ground and making a connection with them on the topic at a personal level, and also by acknowledging that they themselves are also competent on the topic. The audience also senses goodwill when it is clear the speaker is trying to make their job as listeners easier—that is, by making the speech "listenable" (cf. Chap. 5).

Returning to the sense of ethos as "speaking personality" or "speaking persona" that is more specifically developed in this book, it can be divided into several components:

1. *Cultural ethos*: the component which is dependent on cultural factors—for example, an "Anglo-Saxon ethos";
2. *Generic ethos*: the component which is dependent on genre—and will be discussed in the following chapter;
3. *Personal ethos*: the component dependent on the speakers themselves—that is, the way their individual character, irrespective of cultural or generic constraints, is projected through the discourse.

Importantly, all of the three components above are closely associated with ethos in the general sense of establishing speaker credibility: that is, speakers gain credibility when they adapt their discourse to the cultural and generic constraints at hand. As regards personal ethos, it can either confirm or override cultural and generic constraints—and either contribute to or undermine speaker credibility. For example, during the 2016 US presidential campaign, some critics in the media judged the voice of Hillary Clinton to be "too shrill"—in other words, her speaking persona

was not considered to equate with what was expected from a presidential candidate. During the same election campaign, Donald Trump refused in many contexts to adopt the solemn, formal style of speech generally associated with the function of president. Instead, he spoke with candour and even aggression, in a style that has come to be considered idiosyncratic of his persona. While his style disrupted the traditional conventions of American politics, it proved a successful strategy for a candidate who, some would claim, won the election precisely because he did not embody traditional American politics.

Speakers can therefore be unaware of certain cultural and generic constraints, or deliberately put them aside either because they do not feel comfortable with them or because they do not adhere to them. For the non-native speaker who is faced with speaking in public in English, this proves risky. It is most likely that if, for whatever the reason, you appear to refuse certain cultural and generic constraints, this will have a negative impact on speaker credibility. For example, a German or French academic can choose to read from a script when addressing native English speakers at an international conference, but she/he runs the risk of losing their attention—a point that will be taken up in Chap. 5.

An Anglo-Saxon Ethos: An Essential in Today's Global Workplace

The cultural implications discussed in this chapter can be observed in the global workplace. It is now basically taken for granted that English is the lingua franca and that everyone needs English in their working life. However, mastering the English language is no longer enough. What counts now is that the non-native speaker appears comfortable in the language—and adopts the cultural codes that go with the language. In other words, it has become necessary to *behave like an Anglo-Saxon and adopt an Anglo-Saxon ethos*.

This marks a turning point: previously, studies of English as a foreign language highlighted use of language as a "tool" to carry out "transactional goals" (where, moreover, errors in grammar and vocabulary are tolerated), distinct from language used "for identification" that expresses

the full range of communicative functions, including emotional and relational ones.[8] In the first instance, information is purportedly exchanged in what is like a cultural void, whereas in the second instance, cultural considerations are an inherent part of the meanings exchanged.

This trend towards growing expectations in terms of cultural competence can be noted in the job recruitment process. For instance, recruiters are asking more personal questions (e.g. "who is your role model?", "what are your beliefs?"), test for humour, and, in many cases, are choosing linguistic and cultural competence over skills and experience in the specific sector. International companies that are not from English-speaking countries are now entrusting the recruitment process to consultants or employees of Anglo-Saxon origin. This phenomenon is indicative of the larger corporate picture, where the same firms are adopting not only business practices typical of American corporate culture (and the individualistic values that go with capitalism), but also English as the lingua franca. Indeed, while it is hardly surprising, for example, that the American clothing company Abercrombie & Finch conducts a two-week intensive manager training program in English for their international recruits, the Swiss insurance company SwissRe conducts internal business procedures in English—including at their headquarters in Zurich, where most top managers are native German speakers.[9]

Let us end this chapter by identifying different features attributed to an Anglo-Saxon ethos or speaking personality in a speech delivered in a corporate context. It was given by Brett Briggs, the chief financial officer of the American retail corporation Walmart, during a "showbiz-style" shareholder meeting. He delivers the speech standing on a bare stage, in full view of an audience of hundreds of shareholders. He begins in the following way:

> You know, I have this silly dream that one year I would come up here and there's nothing strange going on when I come out here, that it's just normal. I can like do my speech and we can just move on, maybe next year from the ceiling, I don't know, I hate to think. [laughter] […] How cool is this week? [cheers] It is so much fun to have you here, and it's so much fun to have you here to celebrate our company. (Brett Briggs, chief financial officer, Walmart, Shareholder Meeting, 2017)[10]

The speaker fosters a friendly ethos, beginning with a joke and making reference to the great atmosphere of the meeting/show. The entertainment value of the meeting is clear—"it's so much fun to have you here"—as well as the function of the speech which serves to "celebrate" the company more than to inform. This opening is followed up by a story:

> We have built together an incredible business, and it's a business that is positioned to win today and a business that is positioned to win in the future. Now as he said, I'm the finance guy, so I'll get to some numbers in a minute. But before I do that, I want to tell you just a quick story. So, when I was a kid, I loved to play sports. [photo projected of speaker as a child playing basketball] Yeah, that's that's me in number 24 striking fear in the hearts of opponents. [cheers] I was and still am really competitive, and when I was in 8th grade I remember asking my dad whether I should focus more on grades, or whether I should focus more on sports. Don't laugh, I was OK at sports. And he gave me that Dad look, you know that look, and he said "ah yeah, you'll do well at both."

Even though the speaker is speaking in his capacity as financial director—his job is about figures, or rather, dollars—he warms up his audience by *talking about himself*. The first visual of the slide presentation does not display figures but shows a photo of himself as a child. He concludes this story by relating it to the speech itself and the context of delivery, insisting on the coinciding time reference ("this morning"):

> Now, my dad knew the value of being balanced and how important that was to being successful, probably also figured the MBA wasn't calling on number 24 any time soon. But that story, and the importance about both is what came to mind when I was thinking this morning about what to say and what to talk to you about this morning.

Overall, the language is casual—for example, "How *cool* is this week?"; "I'm the finance *guy*, so I'll get to some numbers in a minute"—and includes many forms of language used in a one-to-one conversation: direct questions, imperative forms ("don't laugh"), the connectives "you know", "now", "so", "but", "and". And the speaker uses direct speech in the narrative of his personal anecdote ("and he said 'ah yeah, you'll do well at both'").

Notes

1. Transcribed from video retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1-G1M-EassA.
2. Transcribed from video retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lfchqY5eiJE.
3. Transcribed from video retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qAodJpGB4Uw.
4. For example, the British tend to be more formal than Americans. There are for instance clear contrasts between the American reality TV program "Sharks Tank" and its British equivalent "Dragons' Den", especially the presentation styles fostered in the sales pitches that each televises.
5. The cases of second- and third-generation immigrants raise a number of issues which cannot be covered in this book. With the risk of appearing general, let us say that, depending on the country of origin, they can be either completely integrated into the culture of the country and therefore be comfortable with and conform to Anglo communication culture or, conversely, experience difficulties because they maintain a close link with the culture of origin.
6. Aristotle, *The Rhetoric*, Book II, 1377b.
7. As noted above, this aspect has become essential to Anglo communication culture, where it is linked to the moral cause motivating the speaker.
8. For a discussion of this distinction, see for example Koester (2010).
9. Much work has been carried out on American corporate culture and with it the status of the English language via the ideological and critical lens of critical discourse analysis. This dimension is important to keep in mind, but is not the main aim of this book.
10. Transcribed from video retrieved https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4GvDDHWQXBA.

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2

Genre and Generic Competence

1 Three Speech Openings

Public speaking engenders an extremely diverse range of communication practices spanning different sectors and purposes—from political speeches and sermons, to the TED talks and keynotes. Each context will generate specific uses of language, reflect a specific format and will engage with the various paralinguistic devices (delivery, staging, etc.) in specific ways. Let us begin by comparing three different speech openings, beginning with President Kennedy's inaugural address:

> Vice President Johnson, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Chief Justice, President Eisenhower, Vice President Nixon, President Truman, reverend clergy, fellow citizens, we observe today not a victory of party, but a celebration of freedom—symbolizing an end, as well as a beginning—signifying renewal, as well as change. For I have sworn before you and Almighty God the same solemn oath our forebears prescribed nearly a century and three quarters ago. (J. F. Kennedy, inaugural address, 1961)

This speech begins with a list of terms of address: names of dignitaries, some of whom stand behind the speaker and provide a backdrop to the

speech that is being delivered from a pulpit. This opening announces the formality of the speech, which is developed over the subsequent lines:

> The world is very different now. For man holds in his mortal hands the power to abolish all forms of human poverty and all forms of human life. And yet the same revolutionary beliefs for which our forebears fought are still at issue around the globe—the belief that the rights of man come not from the generosity of the state, but from the hand of God. We dare not forget today that we are the heirs of that first revolution.
>
> Let the word go forth from this time and place, to friend and foe alike, that the torch has been passed to a new generation of Americans—born in this century, tempered by war, disciplined by a hard and bitter peace, proud of our ancient heritage—and unwilling to witness or permit the slow undoing of those human rights to which this Nation has always been committed, and to which we are committed today at home and around the world.

This extract contains many long sentences (in particular the last one). These are made possible thanks to parallel structures that generate a carefully crafted rhythm: "born in this century, tempered by war, disciplined by a hard and bitter peace, proud of our ancient heritage"—four phrases each beginning with the English past participle (*-ed*) form. Here, the use of many adjectives produces a literary, ornate style.

The staging is quite different in the following TED talk which, characteristically, is delivered without a pulpit, by a speaker who stands alone on a darkened stage with his body in full view of the audience. Up until the moment the slide presentation begins (just after these introductory remarks), the only touch of colour on stage is provided by the circular red carpet on which the speaker stands. Instead of a microphone placed on a pulpit, the speaker wears a wireless headset microphone over one ear. The speaker is not dressed in suit and tie, but in black trousers and a black jumper. This informality extends to the language, which includes casual forms, as of the speech opener "Good morning everybody", and the speech is launched via a series of questions which engage directly with the audience:

Good morning everybody. I've got a question, and I'm hoping on the off chance maybe somebody has the answer. I've many questions that I'd like the answers to, but I have one in particular: is there anyone here um who learned to ride a bicycle as an adult? That is or tried to ride a bicycle as an adult, who never had experience with a bicycle as a child but decided as an adult to do that? Anybody do that? [pause; several audience members say "yes"] OK, how did that go for you? [laughter] What? Not very well, is that what I heard? Yeah. (J. Lichtman, "Connectomics", TEDxCaltech, Pasadena, CA, 2013)[1]

Indeed, in contrast to the abstract notions and general references that fill Kennedy's inaugural, the TED talk centres on specific reference to the audience (cf. "you"). The speaker moves on to tell a personal anecdote:

I have a neighbour uh who's in the same predicament. […] She bought a bicycle, and I watched for a summer. I went to work, but when I was home [laughter] I watched her, and uh, as far as I could tell, this woman is neurologically normal in all respects except when she gets on a bicycle when it's as if she doesn't have a cerebellum, and she's just moving back and forth, she just cannot keep it balanced. And literally her children are riding circles around her, making fun of their mother, must have been very embarrassing, and by the end of the summer she progressively used the bicycle less and less. And she's never been out on a bicycle again.

Again, unlike the elaborate, rhythmically balanced structures of Kennedy's inaugural, the syntax more closely resembles that of conversation. In addition, the speaker appears to hesitate (to facilitate reading, some of the hesitation markers "uh" and "um" have been removed from the transcript).

Finally, the opening of the following speech, given by a presiding bishop in a religious—but also royal—context, is different again. This speech exemplifies a very specific type of address—sermons—and, as such, it opens with a ritualistic formula, followed by a quote from the Bible:

And now in the name of our loving, liberating and life-giving God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, Amen. From the Song of Solomon in the Bible: "Set me as a seal upon your heart, as a seal upon your arm; for love is as strong

as death, passion fierce as the grave. Its flashes are flashes of fire, a raging flame. Many waters cannot quench love, neither can floods drown it out". (M. Curry, Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church, speaking at the wedding of Prince Harry and Meghan Markle, St George's Chapel, Windsor, May 19, 2018)[2]

The speaker continues with another quote, this time not from scripture but from the iconic Martin Luther King, and then, as is characteristic of sermons, goes on to develop the theme(s) introduced by the two quotes:

> The late Dr Martin Luther King once said, and I quote: "We must discover the power of love, the redemptive power of love. And when we do that, we will make of this old world a new world, for love, love is the only way."
>
> There's power in love. Don't underestimate it. Don't even over-sentimentalize it. There's power, power in love. If you don't believe me, think about a time when you first fell in love. The whole world seemed to centre around you and your beloved. Oh there's power, power in love. Not just in its romantic forms, but any form, any shape of love. There's a certain sense in which when you are loved, and you know it, when someone cares for you, and you know it, when you love and you show it—it actually feels right.

On the one hand, this speech shares some of the formal hallmarks of the inaugural address. It contains formal language and elaborately structured passages (e.g. the repetition in the last sentence: "when you are loved, and you know it, when someone cares for you, and you know it…"). On the other hand, it resembles the TED talk in that it explicitly refers to the speaker and the audience and therefore makes the latter feel included (e.g. "*If you don't believe me, think about it…*"). The speech is interesting in terms of staging: clad in bishop's robes, the speaker stands behind a candle-bedecked pulpit, upon which rests not the paper of the script, but a tablet that serves as prompter.

Not all sermons resemble this one. In fact, this sermon received much media attention because it was unexpected in the context of a British royal wedding (which was unconventional in many other aspects, such as the inclusion of gospel singing). The style adopted reflects characteristics of the black American tradition (Rosenberg 1971; Engelke 2004), such

as emphatic use of voice and vocal variation, hand gesture and marked eye contact.

To sum up so far, the differences between the three speech openings pertain to the following levels:

– Length and syntax of sentences;
– Literary, ornate language and elaborately crafted structures versus colloquial/more casual language;
– Explicit reference to audience;
– Delivery (e.g. pulpit vs. bare stage, dress code, body language).

These differences can be explained due to the distinct purpose each speech serves. In the case of the inaugural address, the newly sworn-in president delivers a speech that is in keeping with the solemnity and historical impetus of the ceremony. The speech has a legitimating function, serving to mark the fact that the speaker has now entered history. The TED talk aims to inform and, at the same time, entertain. And the wedding sermon serves to celebrate the newly married couple, while offering them guidance by preaching about the teachings of the Church.[3]

Each of these examples instantiates a specific speech *genre*. As public speaking engenders such a diverse range of speech types, a thorough appraisal of genre proves necessary. This will allow you to understand how to adapt your discourse to the expectations of the specific context at hand. In this way, you will be demonstrating generic competence.

2   Genre and Generic Competence

As outlined in the previous chapter, the communicational competence underscored by public speaking is made up of several types of competence. While Chap. 1 dealt with cultural competence, this chapter focuses on generic competence. Speakers demonstrate generic competence when they comply with the norms of the specific format at hand. Their "speaking personality" includes a generic component—or generic ethos—which reflects a sensitivity and an adjustment to the context.[4]

As will be discussed in detail in Chap. 4, this is what especially distinguishes public speaking from conversation. Compared to public speaking, conversation is a more gratuitous means of communication; it is flexible and relatively unstable and disorganised. It takes place between participants of equal status, and requires constant adjustment by each.

In contrast, public speaking takes place in a formal situation and is dependent on an institutional context. This introduces constraints, which inform different types of *genres*.

The term *genre* refers to *a recurrent discourse practice that has become relatively stabilised*. Each genre

– constitutes a specific social practice and implies an institutional context;
– is determined by a specific purpose;
– is based on an identifiable format and sets up expectations in the mind of the addressee.

Genres are defined according to a potentially indeterminate number of parameters. When defining a genre, the first questions to ask pertain to the general context of communication: *who is speaking? to whom? in what medium? for what purpose?* Other common parameters relate to sector of activity, subject matter, context and setting, length, textual organisation and forms of language used (e.g. formal or informal). In addition to these general parameters which are pertinent whatever the medium, those that are more specific to public speaking include the nature of the relation between speaker and audience, the size of the audience, the possibility or not for the audience to intervene, retransmission by the audiovisual media or via the Internet, the length of the speech, the mode of production (e.g. read or learnt off by heart), and whether or not the speaker moves about on the stage, includes a slide presentation, uses humour, appeals to emotion and so on. These features are determined by the purpose of the speech.

However, genres cannot be considered stable entities: because they constitute social practice and are inscribed in a social context, they can come and go, and constantly evolve with changes in society.[5]

The advent of digital technologies has given rise to new channels of communication, and, with them, new discursive entities such as email, websites, blogs, online discussion lists, video-conferencing, Internet video and so on. These are "still in the making" as it were and are not yet stabilised to the point where they could qualify as genres. In fact, some of these discursive entities may well challenge the very principle of genre because they escape predictability: when it comes to websites or blogs, for instance, it could be argued that there are as many types as there are tokens. Importantly, thanks to Internet video, new formats of public speaking have developed—precisely those that have founded the New Oratory—which have become stabilised surprisingly quickly, and therefore qualify as genres.

3   "Persuasive" Versus "Informative" Speeches

If we want to draw up a typology of public speaking genres, distinctions made by classical oratory offer a useful place to start. Aristotle distinguished three main types of rhetoric, which were each linked to a specific purpose—and also to a specific time frame[6]:

- *Deliberative speech*, which was concerned with future action/time and was about "seek[ing] to persuade someone to do something or to accept our point of view". Examples include political campaign speeches.
- *Forensic speech*, which was concerned with past time and, by extension, "to any kind of discourse in which a person seeks to defend or condemn someone's actions". Forensic speech typically related to "the oratory of lawyers in the courtroom".
- *Epideictic* (also called declamatory or ceremonial) speech was "not so much concerned with persuading an audience as with pleasing it or inspiring it". Regarded as "the oratory of display", it was identified "for neatness" with present time. Typical examples include speeches of commemoration or tribute, such as President Kennedy's inaugural address quoted above, or Abraham Lincoln's Gettysburg Address (see

Chap. 8). We can also add many speeches of social life that serve to enact a social connection and bring people together by celebrating a community and the values that found it. Epideictic speech is considered "the most 'literary' and usually the most ornate of the three kinds".

This categorisation was drawn up in order to cater to the reality of rhetorical practice in classical times, and proves difficult to transfer onto that of modern public speaking. For instance, in terms of purpose, a speech aiming to persuade the audience to adopt certain ideas or to sell them something—that is, defining traits of the "deliberative" category—may use as a means to its end celebration and inspiration—that is, characteristics of the "epideictic" category. Such a mixture of deliberative and epideictic can be found in a wide range of public speaking, from sermons (both from the past and of the present period) to new public speaking genres, such as investor pitches.

In fact, most contemporary instances of public speaking conflate with persuasion in one form or another (e.g. political speeches, debating, sales pitches, personal pitches and product launches).

However, several exceptions can be noted. TED talks do not fit any of the three classical categories. They are concerned not so much with persuasion as with the passing on of knowledge (cf. TED's slogan "ideas worth sharing"). The same can be said about three-minute-thesis presentations. Indeed, the information age brought about by the Internet has seen the birth of new formats that are all about knowledge-sharing.

A pertinent distinction within contemporary public speaking genres, particularly those belonging to the New Oratory, will therefore be made between the following:

1. *"Persuasive" genres*: that is, speeches whose primary goal is to persuade the audience in one form or another, and convince them to do something—for example, buy a product, invest money, adopt a certain ideology (e.g. keynotes, investor pitches);
2. *"Informative" genres*: that is, speeches that aim to educate/share knowledge and play an important role in the dissemination of information (e.g. three-minute thesis presentations, TED talks); this category goes well beyond the traditional sector of education and academia per se.

This very general distinction between persuasive and informative genres begs further narrowing down according to the specific genre, which is the aim of the following chapter.

Notes

1. Transcribed from video retrieved https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F37 kuXObIBU&index=17&list=PL021C6C4EE6369EC4&t=0s.
2. Transcribed from video retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OhV0PL49d3Y.
3. In this particular instance, due to the choice of speaker from outside the Anglican Church, it can be argued that the speech also serves a political purpose and aims to bridge the gap between different churches within the Christian tradition.
4. Generic competence is now an important factor in the workplace, where the professional expertise of non-native speakers is determined less by "correct" grammar and language than by conformity to the genre (Planken 2005).
5. According to a key premise of discourse analysis, genres reflect changes in society and, at the same time, are considered to contribute to changes in society.
6. These three definitions are taken from Corbett (1990: 28–29).

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3

A Discourse Analysis Approach to Public Speaking Genres

1   Discourse as Language That Is Staged

According to discourse analysis, discourse is not regarded simply as a set of abstract signs. Rather, it is the product of the *staging* of such signs. Akin to the way a play is staged at the theatre, any instance of language in use—be it written or spoken—is *staged* and directed towards a specific addressee/audience.

Such staging takes place at three levels, each of which corresponds to a specific "scene". The term is used here to systematise *the dynamic process* whereby *different parameters of genre* such as sector, speaker status and target audience *combine*, and will or will not permit *variation*.

Staging occurs simultaneously within each of the following "scenes" (Maingueneau 2002):

– An "enclosing scene";
– A "generic scene";
– A "scenography".

2   Enclosing Scene

The enclosing scene is determined by the institutional context, and coincides with a specific sector of activity. Examples include political, religious, workplace/corporate, advertising, media, educational/academic, administrative and social enclosing scenes. In the case of public address, the most frequent enclosing scenes are:

– Political
– Diplomatic
– Religious
– Media (news, advertising, entertainment)
– Educational/academic
– Workplace/corporate
– Social.

The concept of enclosing scene does not stop at the face value of "sector of activity". It goes further, bringing into sharp focus the central identity of the actors who belong to a particular institutional context, which is founded on one or several core values and makes up a "community of reference". In this, the enclosing scene highlights the specific capacity in which both speaker and addressee are called upon to interact. For example, in the context of public address, are speaker and audience coming together as citizens (in the case of a political enclosing scene)? As worshippers (religious enclosing scene)? As members of a company (corporate enclosing scene)? Or, as friends (social enclosing scene)?

Each of these "identities" is informed by underlying values which justify such an affiliation—for example, values of friendship (social enclosing scene) or values underpinning a particular faith (religious enclosing scene). In some cases, it is easier to single out common values than to put a precise nominal label on the identity that institutes the enclosing scene. For instance, an educational/academic enclosing scene brings together individuals who adhere to the value of knowledge (e.g. either in terms of a "humanist quest" or as a means to better themselves and their chances in life). In contrast, an advertising scene brings together individuals who accept to be part of consumer society. Alternatively, a corporate enclosing

scene brings together not only members of a particular company, but all those who share the goal (in American corporate culture at least) of hard work and making money—although such a goal is now generally packaged under the more palatable "responsibility" banner and the vocation to improve people's lives.

The identity inherent to the institutional context—or enclosing scene—determines a first layer of staging of any instance of language in use. Another layer is provided by the genre itself—or the generic scene.

3   Generic Scene

While the enclosing scene is founded on a *shared identity*, the generic scene is defined by *specific participant roles* (*for both speaker and addressee*) which are closely linked to *the purpose of the speech*. The generic scene is also informed by other variables:

– Time and place, both in terms of the general context (e.g. an eighteenth-century British political speech entails a different generic scene to that of a twenty-first-century American one) and also in terms of the speech duration (e.g. 3 minutes as opposed to 14 minutes) and setting for the delivery (a stage in a lecture hall, parliament, a street rally etc.);
– Organisation of the discourse;
– Language choices.

Let us focus briefly here on contrasts at participant level. Inaugural addresses and campaign speeches are two instances of generic scenes that share a political enclosing scene. However, the inaugural involves a speaker who is taking up office, while in the case of the campaign speech the floor is given to a political candidate. Similarly, the role of the addressee is in each case distinct: the audience of an inaugural plays the role of witness to a ritual and a historic moment, and the audience of a campaign speech that of voter. And, in terms of purpose, the inaugural symbolically enacts the speaker's new leader status, while the campaign speech aims to obtain the votes of the audience.

Table 3.1 lists some different generic scenes attached to public address within educational/academic and workplace/corporate enclosing scenes.

Table 3.1 Examples of two enclosing scenes and their associated generic scenes

Enclosing scene	Educational/academic	Workplace/corporate
Generic scenes	University lecture	Personal pitch (job interview)
	Student presentation	Product launch
	Oral examination	Product demonstration
	Presentation of a PhD project (e.g. for funding)	Investor pitch
	PhD/master's viva	Press conference
	Internship report	Shareholder meeting
		Steering committee presentation
	Conference paper	Briefing/debriefing
	Debating tournament	Motivational speech
	Commencement address	Financial report
	Three-minute-thesis presentation	AGM speeches
	(…)	Retirement speech
		(…)

Each of the generic scenes is informed by specific participant roles and speech purposes. For example, PhD vivas bring together a speaker who is a student and addresses well-established academics, whereas in the context of a three-minute thesis presentation, the same student will be addressing the general public. Similarly, academics address students when they give a lecture, but address peers when they give a conference paper (and participants can be divided further here according to the discipline, e.g. psychology, physics and biology).

Differences in participant roles within the workplace and the corporate world are enlightened by the distinction between "front-shop" or "front-stage" communication on the one hand, where the target audience is located outside the company, and, on the other hand, "back-shop" or "back-stage" communication, which takes place internally and occurs between employees. Examples of front-stage communication include product launches, while examples of back-stage communication include financial reports or briefs and debriefs. Front-stage communication is often staged in such a way that it induces a sense of show. This will depend on the scenography that is adopted, as will be discussed further below.

Table 3.1 includes commencement addresses. These have been placed in the list affiliated with an educational/academic enclosing scene. The

whole point of commencement addresses is that the speaker comes from outside academia—from the media, politics, business or art world. Examples of famous commencement addresses include those given by Oprah Winfrey, Barack Obama, Steve Jobs, Meryl Streep or Tom Hanks. However, these speeches are delivered within the institutional context of a university. They are delivered on site, during a graduation ceremony, in front of academics, graduates and their families. The aim is to celebrate the graduates and provide practical advice about starting out in the world. In this, they both reflect and contribute to promoting the values and identity common to the world of education and academia—which, for instance, explains why Barack Obama's commencement address does not resemble a political speech, nor Steve Jobs' address a keynote or product launch.

Alternatively, some generic scenes can be associated with more than one enclosing scene. For example, investor pitches have been placed in the table under a workplace/corporate scene: they occur in a corporate context and reflect the values of corporate culture (the participants come together to do business and make money). However, when sales pitches become the object of reality TV shows (e.g. budding entrepreneurs sell their business plan in front of investors during the (British) BBC program "Dragons' Den" and the (American) ABC "Shark Tank"), a media/entertainment scene is superimposed upon this corporate scene.

In other cases, the speaker can choose to incorporate several scenes. A tribute delivered by a boss or colleague at a retirement party stops at a corporate enclosing scene when the speaker pays tribute to the future retiree purely as "colleague", but can combine a social scene if the speaker includes a tribute as a friend, therefore promoting the underlying values not just of work but of friendship.

President Obama's Charleston Eulogy: An Example of Two Enclosing Scenes

President Obama's eulogy delivered after the Charleston massacre (June, 2015) provides an interesting example of a speech that enacts two enclosing scenes: a political scene and a religious scene, with the religious scene taking the upper hand.

Typically, a eulogy enacts a religious scene—at least when it occurs within the institution of the church. The Charleston killings actually occurred within an Episcopian church, and its victims were members of the church. When Barack Obama delivered his eulogy during the televised funeral service, he was surrounded on the stage by members of the Episcopian Church. While his speech integrated a political scene—he was speaking as political leader of the nation after a national tragedy—it was natural for Obama to incorporate into his speech a religious scene.

Nevertheless, no one expected him to break out into song, stepping as it were into the shoes of an African American preacher, when he sang *a cappella* several verses of the hymn "Amazing Grace". The force of the speech, which received much attention in the media, derives from the way Obama chose to interlace so closely political and religious scenes, and to amplify via the hymn the affiliation with the religious scene.

4   Scenography

Unlike the usual definition of this word ("scenography" is "the art or job of designing and creating scenery for a show or event"[1]), a scenography does not refer to a static scenery, but to the way speakers choose to address the audience, to perform their speech. This is where we can account for the variation that is permitted or not within a specific genre. Some generic scenes impose a set scenography, or have a preferred scenography, while others leave the speaker with more freedom. For example, a set scenography is imposed by the generic scene of the U.S. inaugural address. If we compare President Kennedy's inaugural with that of President Trump's inaugural delivered in 2017, we can see that the format has hardly changed over the past 60 years: like Kennedy, Trump begins with a long list of terms of address, and uses formal language and elaborate, parallel structures (e.g. "*We will face challenges. We will confront hardships*"):

Chief Justice Roberts, President Carter, President Clinton, President Bush, President Obama, fellow Americans, and people of the world: thank you. We, the citizens of America, are now joined in a great national effort to rebuild our country and to restore its promise for all of our people.

> Together, we will determine the course of America and the world for years
> to come. We will face challenges. We will confront hardships. But we will
> get the job done. Every four years, we gather on these steps to carry out the
> orderly and peaceful transfer of power, and we are grateful to President
> Obama and First Lady Michelle Obama for their gracious aid throughout
> this transition. They have been magnificent. (D. Trump, Inaugural, 2017)

Such a stable scenography at the linguistic level is echoed at that of the
delivery: like Kennedy, Trump speaks in front of assembled dignitaries,
standing before a pulpit upon which is placed a very visible microphone.
In fact, Trump delivers his speech standing in exactly the same place as
Kennedy did, and on the same day of the year (January 20th), as all U.S.
presidents have done.

  This inaugural stands in stark contrast to many of Donald Trump's
other speeches, both his campaign speeches and those pronounced after
he became president, in which he deliberately refuses certain constraints
associated with the routines of the generic scene. This kind of scenogra-
phy is in keeping with "populist" stances. He gives reign to his own per-
sonal ethos, which results in a different scenography, precisely in order to
assert his "outsider" status (cf. Chap. 1). It is significant that he decided
not to do so for his inaugural speech. Similarly, the non-native speaker
who decides to read from a script in a context where the audience would
most probably expect otherwise is introducing a different type of scenog-
raphy from the expected one.

Note

  1. *Cambridge Dictionary.*

Reference

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4

Public Speaking Versus Conversation

1 The Hybrid Nature of Public Speaking

Public speaking has always defied the traditional distinction established in linguistic scholarship between oral and written language. While it is most often scripted in written form, it cannot be placed on a par with writing. Conversely, it is spoken language, but cannot be assimilated with conversation. In this chapter, we will focus on its status compared to conversation, while in the following chapter we will examine its status with respect to writing.

The excerpt reproduced below has been transcribed from one of Steve Jobs' keynotes. The audience heard this piece of discourse being spoken out loud. When you read this written, transcribed version, you most certainly sense that it is not like a typical stretch of written text designed for silent reading. Nor does it resemble a stretch of typical oral conversation. This is what the contemporary language of public speaking in English looks like when put down on paper:

> So, we've gotten off to an exceptional first year, and uh, we'd like to build on that. What about 2011? Everybody's got a tablet. Is 2011 going to be

the year of the copycats? Well, I think if we did nothing, maybe a little bit, probably not so much, because most of these tablets aren't even catching up with the first iPad. But we haven't been resting on our laurels. Because in less than a year, we're going to introduce today iPad 2, the second generation iPad. So, what is iPad 2? What have we learnt? What can we improve? (S. Jobs, iPad 2 launch, 2011)[1]

This extract follows a tight argumentative thread similar to that of written forms of argumentation. At the same time, some of the language is borrowed from English conversation and produces the impression of a dialogue. The extract is built around several pairs of questions and answers, albeit answers provided immediately by the speaker himself. Steve Jobs also makes ample use of words like "well", "so", "and", "but" and "because" that are frequent at the beginning of turns in conversation. And there are also some markers of hesitation, false-starts and self-corrections that suggest on-the-spot formulation.

This speech resembles all of Jobs' later keynotes. He did not read from a script and yet his speeches were prepared down to the most finite detail. They were most likely scripted word for word and then delivered from memory. In addition, nothing was left to chance in terms of when and how Jobs moved about the stage. And the words he spoke tied in closely with those reproduced on the slide presentation.

This new form of delivery combines the formality and the rhetoric that have traditionally defined public speaking, with some of the features of oral conversation. This may appear to be a paradox. To understand this and be better equipped when approaching the task of public speaking, let us take a moment to grasp the similarities and the differences between these two types of orality.

2   Two Types of Orality

Conversation is the most common type of orality. It is what springs to mind when we think about oral language. The status of public speaking is not as clear-cut. It shares the following characteristics with that of conversation:

1. It uses the oral channel: words are *spoken* and *heard*, rather than written and read;
2. It is face-to-face communication: participants share the same space and time; the speaker speaks live to his/her addressees, who are physically present, hear the words spoken, and can generally see the speaker, and the speaker can immediately gauge their reaction;
3. It is multimodal, relying on both verbal and paraverbal modes whereby meaning is not only expressed via the words that are pronounced but also via vocal variation and body language (facial expressions, hand gestures, eye contact, etc.).

However, public speaking differs from conversation due to two main features:

1. It takes place in a formal, institutional framework and engenders different genres (cf. Chaps. 2 and 3);
2. It takes place in *public* and involves multiple addresses;
3. It is based on monologue as opposed to dialogue.

3   Public Speaking as Formal Orality

As discussed in Chap. 2, conversation is a fairly gratuitous means of communication, while public speaking is dependent on an institutional context—and therefore engenders different genres. Unlike casual conversation, which takes place between two or more people in a private context, *public* speaking is exactly that: *public*. The expression *public speaking* is defined as "the action or practice of addressing public gatherings; the making of speeches" by the *Oxford Dictionary*. Other languages, including Ancient Greek and Latin-based languages, contain an expression with an equivalent of the verb *take* (*λαμβάνειν το λόγο, prendere la parola, prendre la parole, tomar la palabra…*), for which the closest English translation might be *take the floor*. All of these insist upon the deliberate action of a speaker who takes centre stage, to produce orality that is formal.

Formal orality must "have an effect" on the audience, who cannot intervene directly in the interaction. We have all been a member of an

audience, listening to a presentation or a lecture, and have most probably found it hard to stay attentive for the entire length of the speech. Conversation does not present such a difficulty. It is very rarely a passive activity, as the addressee can decide at any moment to interrupt and take the conversation into his/her hands. By contrast, public speaking raises the supreme challenge of maintaining the attention of the audience—a challenge compounded when speakers do not use their native language. The audience "is always right", but in many cases not enough consideration is paid to their needs and the difficulties they face.

4   Oral Monologue

Formal orality takes place in many different contexts. A distinction will be made here between contexts of *dialogue* and contexts of *monologue*.

Formal dialogue occurs when several speakers (two or more) interact within one of a number of formats (debates, round tables, interviews, business meetings, etc.) in front of an audience who does not take part in the exchange. The audience can be physically present or, in the case of media interviews (e.g. broadcast on the radio or televised), constitute an "invisible third party". In the latter case, it is indeed for the benefit of the invisible third party that the interaction occurs. These formats share many of the features of the dialogue of conversation. However, the dialogue of formal orality takes place in an institutional context, is a controlled form of interaction, and is therefore partly formatted and predictable.

The dialogue of formal orality is not the focus of this guide, which concentrates on examples of *monologue*: when *one speaker* holds the floor for a specific duration. This is the case for political speeches, welcome or social speeches, keynote addresses, scientific conferences, three-minute thesis presentations, TED talks and so on.

Thanks to your "speaker" status when you are delivering such a speech, you know that you hold the floor and will not be interrupted. Unlike in a debate, for example, you do not have to "fight" to keep the floor. You control the interaction. You can plan your speech, which therefore bears a synoptic structure, similar to the beginning-middle-end structure typical of writing.

The speech length is generally determined in advance, and is part of the constraints of a given genre. You will not develop your ideas in the same way if you know you only have 1 minute (the length of some investor pitches) as opposed to 18 minutes (the time limit of a TED talk) or 1 hour (e.g. some political speeches, such as the State of the Union address[2]). Whatever the length, it is a great advantage when you know the exact time you have. However, a time limit presents the challenge of time management. In some cases, an official timekeeper will interrupt you if you go over time. Presenting your ideas concisely in a race against the clock is a new competency that has become essential for a variety of contemporary public speaking practices.

Some events include moments of monologue and dialogue. This is the case for job interviews which begin with the interviewee's personal pitch (monologue) followed by a series of questions and answers between interviewer(s) and interviewee. Question-answer sequences can also follow academic conferences, investor pitches, business presentations, and so on. Conversely, sequences of monologue can appear within a framework of dialogue, be they expected or not. For example, during a round table session, one speaker may monopolise the floor.

For these reasons, while this book does not directly target formal contexts of dialogue, some of the advice given can be applied in these contexts. This is why a vocabulary and expression bank for dialogue in formal contexts is provided in the appendix to this book.

The different types of orality are summed up in Fig. 4.1. According to this classification, Steve Jobs' keynote quoted at the beginning of this chapter qualifies as an example of formal oral monologue.

5 The Speaker–Addressee Relation

Live Audience and Secondary Audience

There is one particular feature of formal oral monologue that distinguishes it from the monologue of most writing: production and reception *coincide*—or, at least, *partly coincide*. Indeed, we need to take into account contexts where there is not only a live audience which is physically present,

Types of orality:

conversation   formal orality

monologue   dialogue

("public speaking")
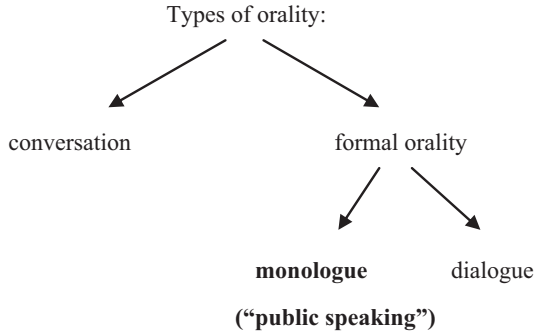
Fig. 4.1 Different types of orality

but also a secondary audience. Thanks to modern means of communication, radio listeners, television viewers and now Internet users can listen or watch a speech without being physically present in the immediate context of delivery. Not only do members of the secondary audience not share the same space as the speaker (they are not physically present at the place of delivery), but they do not necessarily share the same time frame, as they can listen/watch the speech well after the speech has been delivered.

This two-tier audience structure qualifies most political speeches delivered over the past century.[3] However, this structure has been amplified by the advent of the Internet. It is a distinctive feature of new public speaking formats, where the Internet user often constitutes the target audience of the speech and is most present in the mind of the speaker.

This is not to say that the live audience does not play an important role. In fact, it proves essential in order to guarantee the conditions of *public* speaking. While it cannot participate directly (i.e. verbally), the communication is face-to-face and the audience makes its presence felt by other means—applause, cheers, laughter, booing, and so on—which all contribute to the general atmosphere, allow speakers to gauge the effect of the speech and adapt as they go along. They will even go so far as to integrate into the speech rhetorical structures that are likely to trigger applause, cheering, and so on (see Chap. 15).

For the sake of convenience, the terms "live audience" and "secondary audience" will be used in this book without any bias regarding the potential hierarchy that might exist between each.

The Asymmetry Dividing Speaker and Audience

Public speaking hinges on an asymmetrical relation between speaker and listener. *One* speaker addresses *multiple* listeners. As speaker, you are physically separated from the audience and often isolated on a bare stage.

This distance proves both a strength and a weakness. It is confronting and can make you feel vulnerable—hence the stress and stage fright. You face the audience front-on and you yourself are as it were "on the front line". Unlike a writer who is able to hide behind the written word, you cannot hide from your audience. As the sociologist Erving Goffman (1981: 165) wrote, there is a "preferential access" to the person of the speaker, who "pays with his person", as all the members of the audience "have the right to hold the whole of the speaker's body in the focus of stared-at attention".

Modern-day public speaking places emphasis on the full visual experience on stage and on the theatricality of the speakers themselves. People no longer *listen to* speeches; they *watch* them, and they have come to expect the speaker to be in full view.

At the same time, this distance is what allows you to control the situation. You are the master of your text, you have time to plan what you want to say and you are free to develop a certain degree of personal ethos.

More importantly, while the stage separates, it also elevates and provides you with a bird's-eye view of the audience. This is especially what allows you to make a strong connection with them, and to bring them together in one shared body, to form one entity (whether the audience is composed of a live and a secondary component or not). For the head of TED talks, public speaking induces a sense of belonging: it is "the literal alignment of multiple minds into a shared consciousness" (Anderson 2016: xi).

Connecting with the Audience

The speaker experience can include a moment when you suddenly sense that you have "made the connection" with your audience and feel a tremendous buzz and sense of satisfaction and power. This experience is

described by Barack Obama. In his autobiography, he recounts the first time he stood up to speak in public, in his late teens, at a rally against the apartheid regime of South Africa. Step by step, the narrator wins the audience over, building up to the moment of revelation when, he writes, "I knew that I had them":

> "It's happening an ocean away. But it's a struggle that touches each and every one of us. Whether we know it or not. Whether we want it or not. A struggle that demands we choose sides. Not between black and white. Not between rich and poor. No—it's a harder choice than that. It's a choice between dignity and servitude. Between fairness and injustice. Between commitment and indifference. A choice between right and wrong…" I stopped. The crowd was quiet now, watching me. Somebody started to clap. "Go on with it, Barack," somebody else shouted. "Tell it like it is." Then the others started in, clapping, cheering, and I knew that I had them, that the connection had been made. (B. Obama, *Dreams from My Father*, Editions Canongate, 2004, pp. 106–107)

Importantly, Obama's reported speech contains some very specific forms of language: figures of speech—repetition and pairing of noun phrases—as well as sentences without verbs. Figures of speech, which will be studied in Part III of this book, structure the speech but also work to create a connection with the audience. They often function like applause cues; this is exactly what happens here, where they trigger involvement of the audience in the form of clapping and shouting, with this instance of monologue turning for a short moment into dialogue.

Staging an Interaction

As speaker, you need to negotiate the asymmetrical relation and the distance between you and your audience. The most common strategy is to symbolically reduce the distance by appealing directly to your audience and creating the impression of a dialogue like that of conversation. In this way, you simulate, or *stage* an interaction within the set-up of oral monologue.

This is achieved both linguistically (choice of words) and paralinguistically (e.g. delivery and slide show). Linguistically, an interaction can be staged by borrowing from the language that manages the dialogue of conversation, such as first-person pronouns and direct questions, just like in the excerpt of Steve Jobs' speech quoted at the beginning of this chapter.

The degree to which you stage an interaction and to which the language of your speech borrows from that of conversation will vary depending on the public speaking genre and is a choice located at the level of scenography (cf. Chap. 3). Simulating a dialogue with the audience has always been a common strategy in many public speaking genres in English, but has become far more widespread in recent years, to the extent that it can now be regarded as the obvious (non-marked) choice for most instances of public speaking. It is part of the far wider trend towards "conversationalisation" noted in many forms of public discourse, both spoken and written (Fairclough 1994). It also sits well with Anglo-Saxon communication culture, and with the move towards less hierarchical, more horizontal work and social relations. Finally, it can be regarded as a constitutive feature of genres belonging to the New Oratory (located therefore at the level of generic scene as opposed to scenography), as indicated by the emblematic choice of the term "talk" rather than "speech" for TED talks.

Before turning, in Part II of this book, to the different techniques to stage an interaction, we will address the interface between public speaking and writing, and the challenges raised by a written script.

Notes

1. Transcribed from video retrieved https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TGxEQhdi1AQ.
2. This speech, delivered annually by the U.S. president in front of Congress, lasts between 45 minutes and 1 hour.
3. A variation to this two-tiered audience structure can be identified in contexts when speeches are delivered in front of both a jury and a live audience. For example, debating tournaments, sales pitches and three-minute-thesis presentations all require the naming of a winner, the decision being incumbent on the jury, the assembly or both. Speakers therefore need to cater to both of these components of the audience.

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5

Elaborate Orality: Speaking from a Script

1   Strategies of Production

The previous chapter focused on the similarities and differences between public speaking and conversation. This chapter deals with its link to the process of writing. Public speaking can be considered somewhat of a hybrid between spoken and written language. However, it is important to dissociate the linguistic channel/medium of delivery, which is indeed *oral*—words are *spoken* and then *heard*—from the production process which, unlike conversation, is not limited to the moment of delivery, but begins beforehand, and most often involves writing of some sort. Public speaking involves a planning stage, prior to delivery, whereby the speech is at some point committed to paper. And while writing is part of the preparatory stage, it can be a hindrance during delivery.

Speakers choose one of the following three production strategies:

– *Improvised orality*, which involves no prior preparation: production and delivery coincide fairly closely; speakers put ideas into words in real time;

– *Prepared orality*, which involves a planning stage: speakers think about the content in advance, often noting down on paper word for word some main ideas and some parts (e.g. the introduction); speakers can also anticipate responses to counter-arguments which will most likely crop up in the question-answer sequence following the speech itself; this said, speakers will not have a precise idea of the entire speech and will not have written it down in full;
– *Elaborate orality*, where most of the speech is planned in advance and is scripted in full; the speech therefore takes the form of a text in the traditional sense; however, speakers need to make slight adjustments to the text in real time at the moment of delivery, in order to avoid the effect of a written text and to appear fully present in the moment of the delivery.

Elaborate orality—that is, fully scripted speeches—is the most commonly adopted strategy. It is basically compulsory for new public speaking formats because of the short time limits and the concision they enforce. Moreover, for non-native speakers, it proves the safest and the most comfortable strategy.

The adjective "elaborate" ("containing a lot of careful detail or many detailed parts")[1] insists on the structured nature of the speech, which is formatted particularly via language. It also highlights use of language that is striking, and even ostentatious[2]: language that is designed to be performed.

Elaborate speech typically includes adjustments by speakers in real time, such as side comments, exclamations and markers of hesitation. These adjustments correspond to a second layer of production. They help you to negotiate between the written word and the spoken medium. It is therefore important for non-native speakers to have up their sleeve some expressions that can be injected on the spot to liven up the text. These adjustments allow you as speaker to avoid the impression of sounding like the spokesperson of a text that would otherwise be disconnected from the speaking situation.

The three strategies of production listed above are not hard-fast categories. Speakers can decide to change strategies in the middle of their speech. For instance, it is not uncommon for politicians to depart from

the written script and improvise. A famous example is Martin Luther King's 1963 speech delivered in front of the Lincoln Memorial in Washington. The famous "I have a dream" sequence occurs when Dr. King decides to discard his written script (Jones and Connelly 2012). However, we cannot go so far as to say that he was truly "improvising" at that moment, because the leitmotif of the dream featured in a number of his previous speeches, and was first introduced in a commencement speech he had delivered at Lincoln University two years beforehand, in 1961. In 1963, Dr. King drew on this "rhetorical repertoire". Improvisation is a question of degree, particularly when public figures who often take the floor are concerned, such as politicians.

2   Strategies of Delivery

When the speech is fully scripted, a choice must be made in terms of the strategy of delivery. Speakers can choose either of the following:

1. Read from a script that is physically present during delivery (*reading*);
2. Learn off by heart the script, which is not physically present (this is what classical rhetoric called *memoria*);
3. Learn some parts of the speech off by heart and read other parts, which is a compromise between the two other modes, and serves to breathe life into critical parts of the speech (composite mode).

Regarding the second and third strategies, speakers now have at their disposal a number of technical tools to prompt their memory (e.g. prompter and slide presentation).

The different production strategies are summarised in Fig. 5.1.

In many cases, the speaker is not free to choose the production strategy as it is imposed by the genre. According to the benchmark set by Steve Jobs, new public speaking formats are based on fully scripted speeches (elaborate orality) which are learnt off by heart (memoria). The aim is to prepare the speech down to the most finite detail, but to deliver it in a way that suggests spontaneity (improvised mode). This mode of production is in keeping with the modern-day Anglo-Saxon ethos (cf. Chap. 1).

Formal orality

Dialogue   Monologue

Improvised   Prepared   Improvised   Prepared   Elaborate

Reading   Memoria   Composite Mode
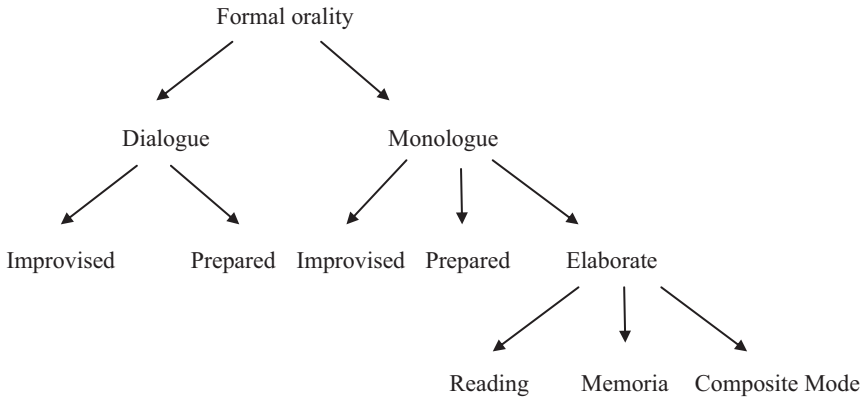
Fig. 5.1 Different production strategies

On the other hand, reading from a script—placed on a pulpit—makes for a more formal and sometimes solemn atmosphere. It increases the symbolic distance between speaker and audience, as well as the speaker's authority. This proves suitable for certain political speeches or academic vivas, for instance. It can also be interpreted as proof that speakers take their role seriously, and have thoroughly prepared for their speaking event. When they have the choice, speakers can choose to read from a script in order to create such an impression. Certain speech formats that used to favour improvisation are now turning to elaborate orality and to reading. For example, members of the European Parliament now read their speeches, a choice that conveys distance and authority.[3]

3   A Rare Example of Prepared Orality: Robert Kennedy

U.S. Senator Robert Kennedy marked history when he announced the death of Martin Luther King on the very evening of his assassination, on 4 April 1968. The senator did not have the time to write out his speech in full. It provides a rare example of prepared orality. In the video recording, we can see the senator occasionally glancing down at a piece of

folded paper in his hands, on which he had most probably jotted down his main ideas.

The transcription of the speech throws into sharp focus a textuality that is predominantly based on passages of elaborate, structured rhetoric but also includes some traces of spontaneous speech. The speech begins in the following way:

> Ladies and Gentlemen, I'm only going to talk to you just for a minute or so this evening, because I have *some, some* very sad news for all of you. Could you lower those signs, please? I have some very sad news for all of you, *and*, I think, sad news for all of our fellow citizens, *and* people who love peace all over the world; *and* that is that Martin Luther King was shot and was killed tonight in Memphis, Tennessee.[4]

What can be regarded here as traces of spontaneous speech are reproduced in italics: repetition ("some") and additive syntax ("and"). However, in the rest of the speech, traces of structured rhetoric abound (in italics), as illustrated in the next part of the speech:

> Martin Luther King dedicated his life *to love and to justice* between fellow human beings. He died in the cause of that effort. *In this difficult day, in this difficult time* for the United States, it's perhaps well to ask *what kind of a nation we are and what direction we want to move in.*

The senator uses accumulation based on binary structures: "to love and to justice"; "what kind of a nation we are and what direction we want to move in". He also uses repetition: "*In this difficult* day, *in this difficult* time". Other parts of the speech are tightly organised around repetition in the form of anaphora, that is, repetition of the same words at the beginning of sentences ("For those of you who are black […]"; "we have to make an effort […]"), which combine with accumulation within a ternary structure ("with bitterness, and with hatred, and a desire for revenge") and another binary structure ("with hatred and mistrust"):

> *For those of you who are black*, considering the evidence evidently is that there were white people who were responsible, you can be filled *with bitterness, and with hatred, and a desire for revenge.*

[…] *For those of you who are black* and are tempted to fill with, be filled with *hatred and mistrust* of the injustice of such an act, against all white people, I would only say that I can also feel in my own heart the same kind of feeling. I had a member of my family killed, but he was killed by a white man.

Such structuring can seem surprising in a speech that has not been written out in advance. However, they are most probably oratory "reflexes" that the Senator had developed over his public life.

4   "Listenability"

A fully scripted speech raises a number of challenges. The first is that of "listenability": the production of words that are "listenable"—that is, that make for *easy listening for the audience*. Writing the script of a speech means producing not language *for seeing* (designed to be read silently by the addressee) (Kress 1994: 67), but language *for speaking*. It means appealing not to the eye but to the ear.

For example, as you draft your speech and put the words down on paper, it is a good idea that you say them out loud in order to test the effect they have on the ear. You also need to ensure that you will be comfortable in saying them, and will be able to convincingly breathe life into them.

Listenability proved less of a challenge back in the era of stenographers, who took down in shorthand speeches that were dictated to them. This method allowed the composer of the speech to avoid contact with the actual medium of the written word, and thus focus on the effect of the words on the ear. A similar result was achieved thanks to the use of a voice recorder. This method has also gone out of fashion, despite the ready availability of recording facilities, such as those provided by smart phones.

To guarantee the listenability of your speech, you need to keep foremost in mind the following two factors when writing it:

1. *The attention span of the audience:*

It is difficult for members of the audience to sit listening to your speech, even if it is short. In fact, the audience will "tune out" very quickly—even after only a few minutes. Listening in such circumstances requires concentration and effort. And the longer the speech is, the harder it is for them to stay "tuned in". Tests suggest that a peak in the attention of listeners occurs around the ten-minute mark, and then drops off considerably. For a speech that extends over the ten-minute mark, you therefore need to double your efforts to maintain the audience's attention.

2. *Cognitive ceiling:*

Cognitive ceiling refers to the amount of information addressees can take in at any one time. In the oral medium, addressees will not be able to absorb too much information at once, however attentive and practised they are in the exercise. The audience has to interpret in real-time. Listeners cannot backtrack, that is, go back over a part that they have not understood, or that they have simply missed due to a lack of attention. Generally, they cannot interrupt the speaker to seek clarification.

As a speaker, it is therefore important to respect your audience's cognitive ceiling and avoid putting them in "cognitive overload". You can do this by introducing your ideas and any new information step by step, and also by repeating it—according to the public speaking adage, "tell them what you're going to tell them, then tell them, then tell them you told them". This adage can be applied at two levels:

At a macro level, with respect to the organisation of the speech: announce the different parts/steps of the speech in advance, and refer back to this roadmap throughout the speech.
At a micro level, within each sentence: avoid long sentences, as well as long sequences of words placed in front of the grammatical subject (we do this naturally in conversation, and in improvised and prepared speech); at the same time, set up a network of repetitions between sentences.

5   The Illusion of Spontaneous Speech

When you read from a script (elaborate orality, reading), the risk is that you keep your eyes glued to the paper/screen, and that the audience feels left out. However, the audience can feel just as left out when the speech is learnt off by heart (elaborate orality, memoria). How to bring a script to life—for example, by putting expression into your voice, and pausing—will be discussed in Part II of this book. But let us take a moment here to consider the challenges posed by learning a script off by heart. Very often, the delivery *sounds* recited and unnatural.

When audience members detect that you are reciting a previously prepared text, the speech is likely to seem disconnected from the context, and the general impression will be that you "did not deliver"—that you were not "with" your audience.

If you recite your speech from memory, you need to be able to foster a style that *disowns the script*. This requires that you *feign spontaneity*. Such a style of delivery is characteristic of new public speaking formats—despite the fact that the audience is not dupe and knows full well that speakers have prepared and rehearsed their speech over and over again.

In church oratory, feigning improvisation or "extempore speech" (from the Latin *extempore*—"outside/escaping time", "produced on-the-spot") has always been considered to be the best way to spark interest and emotion.

Of course, whether we call it spontaneous, extempore or improvised speech, this proves too tall an order in most public speaking contexts. However, the aim needs to be to banish the spectre of the script and provide, to quote the sociologist Erving Goffman, "the *illusion* of fresh talk" (my emphasis), with fresh talk concerning speech "formulated by the animator from moment to moment". Interestingly, the English expression "speaking off the cuff"—which nowadays indicates a speech delivered without preparation—originally referred to the practice of jotting a few key words down on your shirt cuff. This served as a prompter and allowed speakers to feign improvised speech.

Steve Jobs was very good at this. According to Paul Vais (quoted in Gallo 2010: 182), who worked alongside Jobs at the company NeXT, "we'd try to orchestrate and choreograph everything and *make it more alive than it really is*" (my emphasis).

The illusion of spontaneous speech can be achieved by combining the following techniques:

1. *Write in spoken prose*

To borrow another expression coined by Goffman (1981), when drafting your speech, you need to "write in spoken prose". Not only do you need to say your speech out loud so that it is "sayable" and listenable, but it is also a good idea to insert forms of language that suggest (spontaneous) conversation. Good examples of this are discourse markers such as "now", "well" or "you know", used at the beginning of turns in conversation (see Chaps. 7 and 18). This is the opposite to what was observed in Robert Kennedy's speech, where, in non-scripted mode, he had inserted forms of language that suggested elaborate orality.

2. *Make real-time adjustments*

It has already been mentioned that elaborate, or scripted, orality needs to be accompanied by adjustments made in real time. Adjustments such as a side comment, replacing one word with another, commenting on the audience's perceived reaction at certain points of the speech, and so on, all bear witness to the fact that you stay attuned to your audience.

3. *Hide the fact you are reciting from memory*

This means that you *make it sound* spontaneous by varying your voice, and avoiding monotony. The risk is to overuse the rising tone in English and to forget to pause and stop for breath because you are worried that you will forget what comes next. Achieving variety in your voice will come with practice, but you can start by listening to TED talks and imitating the speakers' intonation patterns.

4. *Be alive to the moment*

As Goffman explains, there are moments when the speaker "seems most alive to the ambience of the occasion and is particularly ready" (Goffman 1981: 178). You need to appear 100% present and involved in

the moment of delivery. Even though the speech has been written beforehand, you need to *coincide with* the moment of delivery—and therefore with your audience.

Notes

1. *Cambridge Dictionary*.
2. *Oxford Dictionary*.
3. This has made the task of EU Parliament interpreters more difficult: they now have to translate in real time speech that is far more elaborate and closer to written language than to spoken language.
4. This extract and subsequent extracts transcribed from video retrieved https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BCrx_u3825g.

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Part II

Staging an Interaction with Your Audience

6

Comparisons Between the Language of Conversation, Writing and Public Speaking

Among the stakes underlined in Part I of this book was the necessity to speak to be "listenable" and to connect with your audience. This part focuses on ways to "stage" an interaction with your audience and hence symbolically reduce the fundamental asymmetry between you both. One way for you to achieve this is to use forms of language that are typical of conversation. In order to better grasp in exactly what ways public speaking borrows from the language of conversation and, at the same time, incorporates more formal elements, we will begin by comparing samples of English conversation and writing. The sample of writing will then be adapted in order to turn it into a speech, and we will end with an extract from an attested speech. The various forms introduced here will be taken up in detail over subsequent chapters.

1 An Example of Conversation

Let us begin by examining an extract of casual conversation. The text reproduced below was transcribed from a recording of a real dialogue between four participants (P1, P2, P3 and P4). This particular moment

of the dialogue is located near the end of quite a long conversation, as indicated by the remark made by participant no. 1 ("this has been a long conversation"). This meta-linguistic comment (relating to the exchange itself) is met with a prolonged silence, which will be the object of another meta-commentary:

P1   This eh has been a long conversation.
      [Dead space in the conversation]
P2   In France they say "An angel is passing".
P3   In English too.
P2   Really?
P3   Umm
P2   == Oh I've never heard that before
P4   == == I've never heard of that
P3   Well I think so. I think I've heard it first in English but maybe they were just translating. I don't know.
P2   I thought in English it was "Someone's walked over"
P3   Oh "over your grave". You're probably right. Maybe I have heard it only in French.[1]

We can identify the following features of the language of conversation[2]:

1. *Everyday vocabulary*, in keeping with a private conversation, with none of the specialised vocabulary that can be found in some instances of public speaking;
2. *The "shape" of the transcribed text*, which does not resemble writing: it does not have a beginning-middle-end structure; conversation is not organised globally, and it can be divided up into "turns"; the main exchange occurs between participants 2 and 3, who together produce 8 out of the 10 turns;
3. *Traces of spontaneous speech*, such as hesitation marks (*eh, umm*) and interruptions: conversation is dynamic, taking place step by step, with some backtracking, false-starts, repetitions and interruptions; at several places in this extract, a participant is interrupted by another, and sometimes overlaps with another (indicated here via the symbol ==);

use of the discursive marker "well" at the beginning of a turn also suggests spontaneity, as well as subjectivity;

4. *Syntax that does not always resemble that of writing*: utterances are not always syntactically complete (N.B. we cannot talk officially about "sentences", a term applicable only to writing, and full stops appear here only to facilitate reading); some utterances lack a verb, and some do not contain the unit <Subject + Verb + Complement> considered the basic structure of the English sentence, for example "In English too" and "Really?"—the latter example is a question, but the interrogative value is not marked in the words (e.g. interrogative pronoun, or inversion subject-verb) but simply via intonation (a rise in pitch); questions are a key ingredient of dialogue, as are imperative forms;

5. *Words whose meanings can only be understood by reference to the immediate context*, such as first- and second-person pronouns referring to the participants (seven instances of the pronoun *I*; one instance of *you*);

6. *Expressive and subjective language*, expressing the emotions and attitudes of the speakers, for example via exclamations (e.g. "Oh") and adverbs (e.g. "maybe");

7. *Short and relatively simple utterances*, which contain little coordination or subordination; the same simplicity in structure applies to syntactic units at other levels, such as noun phrases, that are simply composed of <determiner + noun>, with no qualifying adjectives that would raise the level of lexical density and hence the cognitive load placed on the addressee.

Here is a summary of forms of language typical of conversation which can, depending on the genre, be transposed to the context of public speaking:

– Discursive markers: *well, now…*
– Hesitation marks: *eh, um…*
– First- and second-person pronouns: *I, you, we*
– Greetings: *Hello, good morning…*
– Forms of politeness: *please, thank you…*
– Exclamation: *Oh, Ah…*

– Direct questions
– Imperative forms: *look at this; let's do this*
– Short utterances
– Utterances without a verb

2   An Example of Writing

Reproduced below is an excerpt of writing taken from the introduction to a critical edition of Jane Austen's *Emma*. It was written by an academic who discusses here the myth of "rustic boredom" associated with Austen's own life:

> Jane Austen was born in Steventon, Hampshire in 1775, the seventh child of the Reverend George Austen and his wife Cassandra (1). Because of her country background, a tradition of rustic maiden aunt gentility—even boredom—has grown up round her life (2). She is seen as a clever spinster buried by circumstances in a cottage (3). As late as 1961 the poet and critic Donald Davie could describe her life as 'painfully quiet' although when the bald facts are stated and we see what her circumstances really were and how she might have exploited them as a novelist, we are able to understand something of the real nature of the discipline she employed to make herself great (4).[3]

This text displays some typical features of written English, namely a high density of information, and sentences that are long and relatively complex. Density of information, or lexical density, is one area where spoken and written languages differ. Lexical density refers to the rate of lexical words (nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs) per total number of words, excluding therefore grammatical words (determiners, prepositions, auxiliary verbs, etc.). Studies have revealed that the borderline between spoken and written language lies between 40% and 50% (Ure 1969; Stubbs 1986). In other words, the rate of lexical density will not rise above 50% of the total number of words in spoken language, and will not fall below this rate in written language.

As regards sentence length and syntactic organisation, many sentences in the Jane Austen text contain more than the basic unit <Subject + Verb + Complement>. For example, the first sentence does not stop at the date or place of birth of Jane Austen, but provides further information about her family in an apposed nominal phrase at the end of the sentence ("the seventh child of…"). Similarly, the second sentence does not begin with the grammatical subject, but with an adverbial clause expressing a causal relation ("Because…"); the same sentence contains a segment placed between hyphens ("even boredom"). The shortest sentence of the extract is sentence no. 3. Then comes the longest and most complex sentence of the text, beginning with the time adverbial "*as late as*" followed by seven conjugated (finite) verbs: to the right of the main clause is the subordinate—*although* clause, which itself contains an embedded pair of clauses: subordinate—*when* (containing two clauses coordinated via "and") + the main clause to which it is attached "we are able to understand…". If this sentence were read out loud as is, it would prove extremely difficult for the audience to follow: it would not be "listenable", and would place the listener in "cognitive overload". In order to respect the cognitive ceiling that applies in the context of aural reception, the text needs to be adapted and rewritten.

3   Transposing a Written Text into Oral Monologue

Two rewritings of the Austen text are presented below. In the first version, the aim has been to avoid cognitive overload, while maintaining a relatively formal style that would be appropriate in an academic context (e.g. student presentation, academic conference). The second version has been tailored to cater to a less-specialised audience, adopting a style more akin to that of a TED talk.

Adaption no. 1:
Jane Austen was born in 1775, in Hampshire in the town of Steventon. (1)
She was the seventh child of a parson and a lively woman named Catherine. (2)

She was born and brought up in the country, and she therefore became associated with a tradition of rustic gentility, maiden aunts, and even boredom. (3)

She is seen as a clever spinster buried by circumstances in a cottage. (4)

This image prevailed well into the twentieth century. (5)

To quote a poet and critic, Donald David, writing in 1961, her life was "painfully quiet". (6)

However, when we look at the bald facts, when we see what her circumstances really were, how she could have exploited them as a novelist, we see her in a different light. (7)

We are able to understand how, with discipline, she made herself great. (8)

In this first version, the content of each sentence has been "unpacked" and "spread" over several sentences. Sentences are now shorter, contain fewer parts and boast a simpler syntactic structure. For example:

– *Sentence no. 1 of original written version > 2 sentences here (no. 1 & 2)*: in the first sentence of the new version, the order of information (date + place) has been reversed; in the second sentence, proper nouns (that are difficult to take in aurally) have either been removed or simplified, and the adjective "lively" has been added to introduce the mother and allow the audience to visualise her;
– *Sentence no. 2 > Sentence no. 3*, in which the adverbial phrase "because of her country background" has been transformed into a clause with a finite verb ("She was born and brought up in the country"); a logical order of <cause + consequence> ("and therefore/so…") has been introduced; the nominal phrase "a tradition of rustic maiden aunt gentility" has been broken down into two parts that are presented one after the other, and now appear at the end of the sentence, where they benefit from end-focus together with the content that had appeared between hyphens in the original ("even boredom");
– *Sentence no. 3 > Sentence no. 4*: the original sentence has been left as is, because it is short and shares some of the characteristics of a sound bite, or one-liner (cf. Chap. 14);

– *Sentence no. 4 > four sentences (no. 5 to 8)*: in the rewritten version, the quote has been more explicitly linked to the context and its pertinence announced in advance; the passive structure "when the bald facts are stated" has been replaced by an active structure, "when we look at the bald facts", which creates a parallelism with the following clause ("when we…").

Adaption no. 2:

I'm going to talk to you about one of the great novelists of the English language, and some of the misconceptions we associate with her. (1)

You've all heard of her. (2)

Most of you would have read her. (3)

Jane Austen. (4)

Her life began in 1775, in a small town of Hampshire, in the south of England. (5)

She was born and brought up in the country, and we have tended to associate her with a tradition of rustic gentility and a tradition of maiden aunts. (6)

"A clever spinster buried by circumstances in a cottage" wrote one critic. (7)

Her life was "painfully quiet" wrote another. (8)

Well, I'd like to take a closer look at the facts. (9)

When we look at the bald facts, when we see what her circumstances really were, and how she could have exploited them as a novelist, we see her in a different light. (10)

Yes, thanks to her own pure discipline, she made herself great. (11)

The tone of this second adaption is quite different. Two types of additions have been made with respect to the first adaption:

1. Additions that echo the language of conversation and therefore create an illusion of dialogue:

   – References to the first and second person: *I, you*;
   – The discourse marker *well* and the adverb *yes*.

2. Additions that improve listenability and/or serve to stage the speech and create a sense of theatricality:

    – References to the speech itself, whose aim is made explicit: "I'm going to talk to you about…"; and towards the end: "I'd like to take a closer look at the facts";
    – General information that creates expectation and builds up to the announcement of the topic of the speech: "one of the great novelists of the English language"; "You've all heard of her…"—followed by the announcement of the topic in a separate sentence, without a verb: "Jane Austen";
    – Elements of story-telling (cf. Chap. 7), including details which will help the audience to visualise what is being said ("in a small town of Hampshire, in the south of England");
    – Parallel structures in sentences 7 and 8 which each frame the quote (with the structure <[quote] wrote X>).

4   An Example of a Speech

Language similar to that introduced in the rewritings above can be found in an extract of an attested speech, delivered by a student at the opening of a Model United Nations (Model UN, or MUN) conference.[4] The speech begins in the following way:

> Our esteemed guests, delegates, advisors, and the MUN executive board, a warm welcome to you all. It is with great pleasure that we welcome you to Georgetown-Qatar Model United Nations 2015. As you may have noticed when signing in, or by simply looking around you, it is clear that many of you come from different nationalities, schools, backgrounds and countries. This diversity serves a great asset to our conference, as the issues that shall be discussed in the different committees will be coming from very different regions, all over the world. Challenging these issues aids us in understanding this world of ours that is currently in turmoil, and deconstruct[ing] the changing politics that shape it.[5]

The speech is launched via a direct address to the audience ("Our esteemed guests, delegates…") and a sentence without a (conjugated) verb ("…a warm welcome to you all"). There are also direct references to the time and place of delivery ("Georgetown-Qatar Model United Nations 2015"; "our conference"). The discourse marker "now" launches a new section of the introduction:

> Now I do hate to start with a cliché, cheesy quote, but this one actually serves a purpose, I promise. Dag Hammarskjöld, the second Secretary General of the United Nations, once said "Everything will be all right. When? When people, just people, stop thinking of the United Nations as a weird, Picasso abstraction, and see it as a drawing they made themselves". See, the reason why this quote stood out for me is because the most prominent and common cause that brings us all here today in this auditorium, is the very fact that we do think that we are capable of making this drawing ourselves.

"Now" is typically used in conversation at the beginning of a turn, and creates the illusion here of spontaneous dialogue with the audience. The imperative form "see" produces a similar effect. And in all, this introduction contains 15 direct references to participants (*I/me*: 2 instances; *You*: 5; *We/us/our/ours/ourselves*: 8). This second passage also contains direct reference to the context of delivery ("[the] cause that brings us all here today in this auditorium").

Other language forms that are not typical of conversation contribute here to the staging of the speech:

– *repetition of the expression of welcome*: "a warm welcome to you all. It is with great pleasure that we welcome you to Georgetown-Qatar Model United Nations 2015";
– *pairing*: "when signing in, or by simply looking around you"; "aids us in understanding this world… and deconstruct[ing]…"; "a cliché, cheesy quote"; "the most prominent and common cause";
– *accumulation of more than three nouns*: "different nationalities, schools, backgrounds and countries".

These are all rhetorical figures of speech. They increase the rate of lexical density and make for longer sentences than those typically found in conversation. However, they do not jeopardise listenability. In fact, they have quite the opposite effect, as they enhance the rhythm of the speech. These figures will be studied in Part III of this book.

The following chapters will focus on forms of language and other paralinguistic features (delivery and the slideshow) that allow you to connect with your audience by staging an interaction with them.

Notes

1. Adapted from: Eggins and Slade (1997: 46).
2. For a detailed description of the language of conversation, see M.A.K. Halliday (1985, 1989) *Spoken and Written Language*, Oxford, D. Biber et al (1999) *The Longman Grammar of Spoken and Written English*, Longman, and Eggins and Slade (1997) op cit.
3. Source: Introduction by Ronald Blythe to the Penguin edition of Jane Austen's *Emma*, 1966, p. 8.
4. Model United Nations conferences allow students to participate in simulated sessions of the United Nations.
5. Model United Nations, Georgetown University, Qatar, 2015; extracts transcribed from video retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hjQNEOtMZ6E.

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Stubbs, M. (1986). Lexical Density: A Technique and Some Findings. In M. Coulthard (Ed.), *Talking about Text. Discourse Analysis* (Monograph No. 13) (pp. 27–42). ELR, University of Birmingham.

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7

Talking to Your Audience

1   Language to Talk to Your Audience

The first means to stage an interaction is to engage directly with your audience—that is, talk to them. Table 7.1 presents two versions of the first lines of the same speech that aims to increase awareness about climate change.

Version 1 resembles written English, and is better suited to being read (silently) by the addressee. In contrast, version 2 is livelier. The sentences in version 2 are shorter and more numerous, which makes it easier to read them out loud. In addition, it contains repetition, which enhances the rhythm, such as that of the progressive tense (be + ING) ("is facing", "are increasing", "are rising", etc.; 2–6) which replaces the list of nouns in version 1 ("increasing temperatures", "seas rising", "less farm land", "extinction of species of animals"). The progressive tense is synonymous with a higher degree of speaker subjectivity, and creates information focus. Repetition in the form of anaphora has also been introduced from sentences 11 to 13 ("we cannot afford to…").

But what is more, with version 1, we have the impression that the speaker is not addressing anyone in particular, that they are detached

Table 7.1 Two versions of a speech on climate change

"Climate change": Version 1	"Climate change": Version 2
Due to the conference that took place last year in Paris on climate change, it is now very difficult to ignore the dangers that our planet is facing: increasing temperatures, seas rising, less farm land, extinction of species of animals, and so on (1)	Remember all the hype around the conference on climate change last year, in Paris? (1)
	None of us can ignore the dangers our planet is facing. (2)
	Temperatures are increasing. (3)
	The sea levels are rising. (4)
	Farm land is receding. (5)
	Certain species are disappearing. (6)
The list goes on and on. (2)	The list goes on and on. (7)
As a young person who has never known a world without talk of all these dangers, having grown up with the repetition of such facts constantly echoing in my ears, I still do not understand why the decision-makers of the world are still simply buying time. (3)	Like most of you here, I've heard these dangers repeated over and over again. (8)
	In fact, we've grown up with these facts echoing over and over in our ears. (9)
	So, why are the decision-makers of the world still simply buying time? (10)
We cannot afford to wait for governmental policies designed to reduce global warming, we need to start doing our own bit right now. (4)	We cannot afford to wait for governments to react. (11)
	We cannot afford to wait for policies to negotiated. (12)
	We cannot afford to wait for others to do the job for us. (13)
	We need to start to do our own bit right now. (14)

from the context of delivery of the speech. Version 2 contains a higher frequency of language that *creates the illusion of an interaction: it stages a dialogue between speaker and audience who are explicitly referred to* (cf. "I", "you", "we"). Dialogue is also simulated via other forms whereby the speaker appeals to the audience and makes them feel more involved, such as direct questions. The aim is to establish a direct link with the audience in order to capture and maintain their attention. These different forms appear in italics in version no. 2 reproduced below:

Remember all the hype around the conference on climate change last year, in Paris? (1)

    None of *us* can ignore the dangers our planet *is facing*. (2)

    Temperatures *are increasing*. (3)

    The sea levels *are rising*. (4)

    Farm land *is receding*. (5)

    Certain species *are disappearing*. (6)

    The list goes on and on. (7)

    Like most of *you here*, *I*'ve heard these dangers repeated over and over again. (8)

    In fact, *we*'ve grown up with these facts echoing over and over in our ears. (9)

    So, why are the decision makers of the world still simply buying time? (10)

    We cannot afford to wait for governments to react. (11)

    We cannot afford to wait for policies to negotiated. (12)

    We cannot afford to wait for others to do the job for *us*. (13)

    We need to start to do *our* own bit *right now*. (14)

Here is a classification of the forms that appear in italics:

1. Direct references to the speaker, who expresses his/her interest in the topic: "I've heard these dangers repeated over and over again" (sentence 8);
2. Reference to the audience (sentence 8);
3. Reference to both speaker and audience taken together: "we", "us", "our" (2, 9, 11–14);
4. Two direct questions (1, 10);
5. A connective typical of conversation: "so" (10);
6. A connective that expresses the subjective stance of the speaker: "in fact" (9);
7. Reference to the here-and-now of the speech delivery: "right now" (14).

Similar language appears in the following excerpt taken from Steve Jobs' keynote delivered in March 2011 when he launched the second-generation iPad. Jobs uses a particularly high number of direct question (sentences 8 to 10). In addition, he uses the discourse marker "well" and

other connectives typical of conversation ("so", "and", "but"), which reinforce the sense of interaction:

> So, we've gotten off to an exceptional first year, and uh, we'd like to build on that. (1)
> What about 2011? (2)
> Everybody's got a tablet. (3)
> Is 2011 going to be the year of the copycats? (4)
> Well, I think if we did nothing, maybe a little bit, probably not so much because most of these tablets aren't even catching up with the first iPad. (5)
> But we haven't been resting on our laurels. (6)
> Because in less than a year, we're going to introduce today iPad 2, the second generation iPad. (7)
> So, what is iPad 2? (8)
> What have we learnt? (9)
> What can we improve? (10) (Steve Jobs' keynote for the iPad 2 launch, 2011)

2   Question + Answer

Observe the following transformations:

Thirty-five thousand people die every year from alcohol-related diseases.
- How many people do you think die every year from alcohol-related diseases? Thirty-five thousand.

Our party will immediately implement policies to reduce unemployment.
- Which party will implement policies immediately to reduce unemployment? Our party.

Smiling is one of the best ways to break the ice at the beginning of a conversation.
- What's one of the best ways to break the ice at the beginning of a conversation? Smile at the person you're speaking to!

As each of the second versions illustrates, much content can be introduced by using the format question + answer. This format boasts the following advantages:

- it creates a pseudo dialogue;
- it creates suspense by presenting the content in two stages;
- it improves listenability because the content is spread out and appears in a structure that displays a lower rate of lexical density;
- in can be used in certain genres (e.g. political speeches, debating) to trigger applause.

3   Taking Questions from the Audience: Announce Your Policy

Rhetorical questions as well as the question + answer pairs illustrated above can be used to create the impression that you are really talking to your audience. At the same time, depending on the genre and the degree of formality, there can be a moment/moments of true interaction between the speaker and the audience. In this case, it is important to announce from the beginning of your speech your policy for questions, stating clearly when you will take questions, either at the end of the speech or during the speech (therefore allowing the audience to interrupt you). Announcing your policy from the outset shows respect and goodwill towards your audience, and is a component of ethos. It also demonstrates that you are in control of the situation and that you have attended to every detail of your performance.

Expressions to announce your policy for taking questions:

Please feel free to interrupt me if you have any questions
Feel free to stop me if you would like/need clarification on a point

I'll take your questions at the end of my presentation
I'll look forward to your questions at the end of my presentation
There will be time for discussion at the end of my talk

4 "Ladies and Gentlemen", "Fellow Delegates": Terms of Address

Terms of address are used in formal contexts and/or in the more theatrical genres such as debating tournaments or sales pitches. A specific person can be addressed, either by name or by function (e.g. "Robert", "Mr. Jones", "Mr. President"), or the audience can be addressed collectively. In the latter case, there is a choice between formal expressions that add solemnity (e.g. "ladies and gentlemen") and less formal expressions that create connivance and/or empathy (e.g. "dear friends", "guys").

Terms of address not only reinforce the sense of interaction. They also create a theatrical effect. They can be used throughout a speech, often at regular intervals, and add rhythm, particularly when they are followed directly by a pause (/), for example:

ladies and gentlemen/I am happy to be with you today

When followed by a pause, they give the speaker time to stall and think about what he/she is going to say next.

In some public speaking genres, particularly political speeches, the convention is to begin by appealing to different members of the audience. This provides the speaker with words to warm up with, before moving into the topic of the speech:

President Pitzer, Mr. Vice President, Governor, Congressman Thomas, Senator Wiley, and Congressman Miller, Mr. Webb, Mr. Bell, scientists, distinguished guests, and ladies and gentlemen. (J. F. Kennedy, "We choose to go to the moon", September 12, 1962)

Some debating tournaments allow for creativity and humour with personalised qualifiers added to the names/titles of the addressees:

Delightful Madam Chair, *most respected* members of the jury, *deluded* members of the opposition, animated members of the House, ladies and gentlemen.

In some genres, terms of address contribute to the build-up to the end of the speech:

> And it is on this basis, *ladies and gentlemen*, that I beg you to support/oppose the motion.
>
> And so, *fellow citizens of the world*, I ask you to think twice before the next time you are tempted to buy one of these brands that very clearly do not practise fair trade.

Finally, when the term of address appears elsewhere in the speech, it is generally preceded by another dialogic marker (e.g. "yes", "no", an interrogative):

> Human rights is not some obscure political problem. No, *ladies and gentlemen*, it's far more real than that.
>
> Don't you think, *dear friends*, that there is far more emotion when you look at a photo that you can hold and feel in your hands than when you look at a photo on Facebook?

Most frequent collective terms of address in English:

Ladies and gentlemen
Fellow citizens
Fellow delegates
Dear/fellow colleagues
Dear friends

5   Attention-Getters

To speak to your audience, you first need to be able to *engage* with them. Hence the technique of the "hook", or "attention-getter". Attention-getters provide different means to launch the speech, often in a theatrical way, and allow the speaker to introduce the topic gradually. The aim is to create suspense and spark the curiosity of the audience, rather than directly identifying the topic (e.g. "Today I'm going to talk to you about…").

A list of different types of attention-getters is provided below. In fact, these strategies prove useful not only for speech openings, but also within the body of the speech in order to maintain the audience's attention, and also in the closing stage of the speech in order to end "on a high" and leave the audience with a lasting impression.

One of the most frequent strategies is storytelling. Storytelling is considered a characteristic of orality, and we even talk about "Oral, narrative cultures" (Ong 1982). Storytelling is renowned in the marketing sphere, but has come to be iconic of public speaking, where some speech coaches call themselves "storytelling coaches". In the American context, the tradition of storytelling in political speeches is said to hark back to the storytelling tradition of slaves. Storytelling is a defining characteristic of TED talks (see Part IV). A famous example in another genre is the Stanford commencement address based on "three stories" delivered by Steve Jobs. Jobs had always exploited storytelling, beginning with the presentation of the first Macintosh computer (see Chaps. 3 and 9), when he painted the history between Apple and its main competitor IBM as an epic battle. Storytelling is also used in quite a different professional context, that of scientific conference papers, where the scientist provides a human entry into scientific fact by relating the (hi)story of the different stages of his research (experiments, discovery).

Types of Attention-Getters

Storytelling:

- Relate a personal experience
- Get the audience to participate, for example "Imagine that…";
- Simulate a journey, for example "I'm going to take you on a journey";
- Tell the story behind the speech itself, for example "I almost didn't make it today…"; "I was walking down the street one afternoon last week reflecting over the following issue…";

Other techniques to appear to the audience/trigger curiosity:

- Ask a question/several questions;
- Share a riddle;
- Quote a writer, a specialist, a famous person, a song…;
- Announce a surprising fact, for example "Within thirty years, some seaside towns, according to climate change specialists, will have disappeared underwater";
  "Did you know that one million people die every year from..?";

  "What if I told you I can save one million lives a year?"

These techniques are illustrated in the examples below.

Relate a Personal Experience

I'd like to start by telling you something that struck me last Thursday. Actually, it wasn't the first time this has struck me. I went to a bakery and asked the sales assistant for a croissant. But she hardly said "hello" to me, and she quickly passed on to the next customer without a word: no "have a good day, Miss", not even a "goodbye". Now, don't get me wrong, I wasn't expecting a great outbreak of joy but, as I left, I realised the effect this had on me. If only she had smiled.

"Imagine That"

Picture this. Mozart: white wig, powdered face, fancy waistcoat, tinkling away at the ivories of his piano. Ravi Shankar, best known Indian musician, sporting a colourful, golden coat, sitar under his arm. The two of them. On stage. At the same time. Together. Two eras. Two continents. Two styles. Impossible? No, I say.

Simulate a Journey

I'm here today to invite you to come with me on a trip into history. Millions of years ago there were no men and no women on earth, but only animals.

All those animals, even if they did not know it, were involved in the process of evolution. In particular, monkeys evolved in a special way which has resulted in ourselves, ladies and gentlemen: homo sapiens. During this evolution, monkeys abandoned walking on all fours, gave up living in trees and started to abandon … their body hair! Yes, ladies and gentlemen, evolution meant abandoning body hair. Consequently, I can affirm, and I am sure everyone in this room will agree, that today body hair can only be a burden and a reminder of our incomplete evolution.

Ask a Question/Several Questions

How many of you students leave university and are unable to find a job? Or, worse still, how many of you students stay on at university, doing more years of study not because you need to reach a higher level of qualification, but simply to bide time, because you're frightened of taking the plunge and trying your luck in the job market?

Quote

They say freedom is a constant struggle. They say that freedom is a constant struggle. They say that freedom is a constant struggle, O Lord, we've struggled so long we must be free.

So the title of my talk is drawn from a freedom song, which was repeatedly sung in the southern United States during the twentieth century freedom movement. (Angela Davis, *Birkbeck Annual Law Lecture*, London, October 25, 2013)

Tell the Story Behind the Speech

Chris Anderson asked me if I could put the last 25 years of anti-poverty campaigning uh into 10 minutes for TED. That's an Englishman asking an Irishman to be succinct. I said uh, "Chris, that would take a miracle." He said uh, "Bono, wouldn't that be a good use of your messianic complex?" Uh, so yeah.

Then I thought, let's go even further, let's go, been 25 years, let's go back before Christ, three millennia, to a time when, at least in my head, the

journey for justice, the march against inequality and poverty really began. Three thousand years ago, civilization just getting started on the banks of the Nile, some slaves, Jewish shepherds in this instance, smelling of sheep shit, I guess um, proclaimed to the Pharaoh, sitting high on his throne, "We, your majesty-ness, are equal to you." And the Pharaoh replies, "Oh, no. You, your miserableness, have got to be kidding." And they say, "No, no, that that's what it says here in our holy book." (Bono, TED talk: "The good news on poverty (Yes, there's good news)")[1]

The last example quoted is taken from the beginning of a TED talk given by the singer Bono. The speech was transcribed true to its delivery, including repetitions, hesitation marks and false starts, which are all typical of conversation. A sense of interaction is created as of the very title of the speech: the second part of the title appears between brackets—"Yes, there's good news"—which suggests a side comment or an afterthought that we imagine the orator saying in real time in response to a rebuttal from the audience.

This introduction exploits two strategies: Bono begins by telling the story behind his speech, explaining with humour why he was invited to give it. After that, he goes back in time: "Three thousand years ago, civilization just getting started on the banks of the Nile". The audience can picture the story in their minds thanks to the attention to detail—"the banks of the Nile"; "the Pharoah, sitting high on his throne"—and also thanks to the appeal to the senses, notably that of smell: "smelling of sheep shit". In addition, the storytelling particularly comes alive thanks to the use of direct speech.

6 Direct Speech

Bono places direct speech within his speech. Like a play performed at the theatre, the audience plays witness to a story that is acted out verbally. This makes the story come alive—and makes the speech more theatrical and engaging for the audience.

The insertion of direct speech does not suit all speech genres. It can appear, for example, in TED talks, sales pitches, debating tournaments

and commencement addresses. In the excerpt of a TED talk reproduced below, direct speech is inserted within a personal experience. The speaker has a role which is played out in the dialogue:

> When I ask people—and I've been asking people this question for about 10 years—I ask them, "Where do you go when you really need to get something done?" I'll hear things like, the porch, the deck, the kitchen. […] And then you'll hear people say, "Well, it doesn't really matter where I am, as long as it's really early in the morning or really late at night or on the weekends." (Jason Fried, TED talk: "Why work doesn't happen at work")[2]

7   Presenting Your Thought Process in the form of a Dialogue

Finally, let us note the technique that consists in presenting a thought process as if it coincided with the moment of delivery:

> Well, how do you solve this? Hmm. It turns out, we have solved it. We solved it in computers 20 years ago. We solved it with a bit-mapped screen that could display anything we want. Put any user interface up. And a pointing device. We solved it with the mouse, right? We solved this problem. So how are we going to take this to a mobile device? What we are going to do is get rid of all these buttons and just make a giant screen. A giant screen.
>
> Now, how are we going to communicate this? We don't want to carry around a mouse, right? So what are we going to do? Oh, a stylus, right? We're going to use a stylus. No. No. Who wants a stylus? You have to get them and put them away, and you lose them. Yuck. Nobody wants a stylus. So let's not use a stylus. We're going to use the best pointing device in the world. We're going to use a pointing device that we're all born with—we're born with ten of them. We're going to use our fingers. (Steve Jobs' keynote for the iPhone launch, 2007)[3]

This extract illustrates the use of a series of questions and answers, as well as other forms of language: discourse markers such as "well" and "now"; "hmmm", which suggests that the speaker is engaged in a thought

process; "oh" suggesting spontaneity, and so on. The audience is kept as if it were on their toes due to the high number of wh-questions and tag-like uses of "right", and the fact that the mood of each sentence (i.e. affirmative, negative, interrogative) constantly changes. During product launches and investor pitches for example, this technique is used to relive the stages of the thought process that led to the creation of the product or service.

The various forms identified in this chapter are summed up in Table 7.2.

Table 7.2 Language to talk to your audience

Personal pronouns *you, we*	If I tell *you* there's no need for pessimism, you probably won't believe me.
	I'm going to talk about a problem that *we* all face.
	We all know how difficult it is to find our path in life.
The possessive pronouns and determiners *your, yours, our, ours*	As Lincoln said to a nation far more divided than *ours*, *we* are not enemies but friends. Though passion may have strained, it must not break *our* bonds of affection. (Barack Obama's victory speech, 2008)
Direct questions	*How many of you* are using email to collaborate with people outside your organisation? (sales pitch; quoted Chap. 8)
	Can we forge against these enemies a grand and global alliance, North and South, East and West, that can assure a more fruitful life for all mankind? *Will you* join in that historic effort? (John F. Kennedy's inaugural)
Imperative forms	*Take* a look at these figures.
	Imagine a world where….
	Don't think you won't be affected by this issue.
	Let's consider the proposal that….
	Let's face it: sometimes men just don't understand women.
	Let's not be taken in by unreliable data.
Greetings	Good morning, good afternoon
	Hello everyone
Terms of address	Ladies and gentlemen
	Fellow students, colleagues
	(Dear) friends
	Members of the jury

Notes

1. Transcribed from video retrieved from https://www.ted.com/talks/bono_the_good_news_on_poverty_yes_there_s_good_news.
2. Transcribed from video retrieved from https://www.ted.com/talks/jason_fried_why_work_doesn_t_happen_at_work.
3. Transcribed from video retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9hUIxyE2Ns8.

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8

Anchoring Your Speech in the Context of Delivery

Staging an interaction depends not only on talking directly to your audience, but also on reproducing other features of conversation such as explicit references to a concrete context of communication. Public speaking hinges on reference not only to your audience but also to the following: (i) yourself as speaker; (ii) place and time of delivery. Inscribing such references in the textuality of your script allows you to "anchor" your speech in the context of delivery and, therefore, increase its pertinence and its appeal to the audience. These two aspects are taken up one after the other in this chapter.

1 Develop Your Own Personal Ethos

Speak in Your Own Name

As we saw in the previous chapter, part of talking directly to your audience is that you speak in your own name. You cannot be self-effacing; you need to underline your role as speaker and put yourself "in the frontline". And, as underlined in the first chapter of this book, speaker ethos that is

individual and personal is an inherent part of Anglo-Saxon communication culture. You may not be used to speaking in the first person by using the equivalent of "I" in your mother tongue, but it is something that you will need to do in most public speaking genres in English, particularly in the New Oratory genres.

A personal ethos serves to legitimate your role and therefore the speech itself. It also makes the audience more eager to listen. The first-person singular pronoun "I" will typically be inscribed several times in the opening lines, particularly to express what motivated you to take the floor to give the speech. Indeed, it is important to express why you have a personal interest in the topic, and to give the reasons why you chose a particular angle. As one communications specialist notes, "inspiring leaders and remarkable companies first share why they do what they do; then they share how they do what they do. They save what they do for last" (Donovan 2014: 75). This comment about the corporate sector sums up a state of mind that is general across the board. Another thing that is expected in Anglo-Saxon culture unlike some other cultures is that you express your personal viewpoint on the topic.

Personal ethos is inscribed via various types of language (in bold) in the following speech opening about a literary topic:

> This morning, I'm going to discuss a few aspects of the work of Somerset Maugham.
>
> I'm interested in this writer because his status is quite ambiguous within the world of literary criticism.
>
> He's much read, and is popular. He was popular back in his era, and he is still popular today. But the thing is that he has never really met with great acclaim by the critics. He wrote novels, but is most well-known for his short stories.
>
> His writings appeal to me for the historical and sociological insights they provide of life in the British colonies, such as Malaysia or India, in the first part of the twentieth century.
>
> Today, I'd like to revisit Somerset Maugham's work, and I'd like to suggest some explanations for the discrepancy I've mentioned between his popularity and his apparent lack of critical success.

The following example is quite different. It is the beginning of a speech delivered as part of a debating tournament in a debating class by a non-native speaker of English (studying English at tertiary level):

> It appears that 78 percent of French voters—which means you and me included—have the opinion that their political system does not work well (2). This result comes from a poll published in January 2014 (3). It is not a fact that any enlightened person could ignore: our country is now coping with a huge number of problems be they economic, political, social… (4) All these problems have come up because of the way our country is run (5). In other words, our French political system does not seem to be the right one anymore (6).

The speech falls far short of the mark in terms of creating the impression of a talk with the audience. Argument is based purely on logic (*logos*). The speaker is self-effacing, the ethos is distant, analytical and "academic" in the negative sense of the term. Such an ethos may prove appropriate for some speech genres (particularly in a university context), but does not in the context of debating. In this speech, the overall feel is that of a speaker who is not involved in what he is saying—he is not personally committed or engaged. The risk is that the audience will not be convinced by the speech. This overall feel can be traced to the following language choices:

– "I" never appears in the position of grammatical subject: the first sentence contains first- and second-person pronouns, but they appear in a clause juxtaposed between hyphens and not in the main clause of the sentence; for the first-person pronoun to be most effective, it needs to appear as grammatical subject of the main clause;
– The first sentence begins with the impersonal construction "It appears that", and even though the speech is delivered to a mostly French audience, the French are first referred to in the third person ("their political system");
– Referents in subject position (e.g. "our country"; "all these problems") do not correspond to specific individuals or animated beings;
– The speaker uses the hypothetical "any enlightened person";

– The speaker uses "in other words" (sentence no. 6), a connective typical of written, analytical prose;
– The speaker is not always assertive (e.g. "does not seem…").

Moreover, the following choices run counter to the development of a personal ethos:

– Impersonal turns of phrase (e.g. "It appears/seems/is important that…");
– Passive constructions (e.g. "It is believed that…");
– Inanimate referents as grammatical subject.

Table 8.1 presents a rewriting of the speech in order to inscribe a sharper focus on the speaker and, hence, construe a more personal ethos. This is achieved thanks to the use of the emblematic first person "I" as grammatical subject in active constructions (e.g. "I feel that…"; "I will argue that…") rather than impersonal structures ("It is felt that…"; "It will be argued that…").

Table 8.1 Rewriting of debating extract "It appears that…"

Did you know that 78 percent of us French voters are of the opinion that our political system doesn't work well?	• Direct interrogative • Subject: "You" • "Our"
I took this figure from a poll taken last January.	• Subject: "I" • "last January": time reference with respect to moment of delivery
I believe that none of us, none of the enlightened individuals assembled here today, can go on ignoring this type of poll.	• Subject: "I" + "believe" • "us" • "here"; "today"
As a country, we are now coping with a huge number of problems: problems that are economical, problems that are political, problems that are social.	• Subject: "we"
There is a direct link between these problems and the way our country is being run.	• Strong assertion: "there is a direct link"
It is quite clear: our political system is no longer the right one for us, and it is high time we changed it.	• Strong assertion: "It is quite clear" • Strong assertion: "it is high time"

The original version of the student's speech above contrasts with the following opening lines taken from a semi-final debating tournament during a national competition.[1] The speaker (a native Chinese student) very successfully adopts a personal ethos in English. This serves to produce a powerful *captatio*—that is, an opening that catches the attention of the audience and shows empathy towards them. The speaker is part of the team arguing against the motion "A man who dies rich dies disgraced".

> Well, to be honest, today I am really scared. I'm scared by the motion which sounds like nothing but a wicked curse. I'm afraid of being burnt disgracefully by this malleable inquisition. I am scared because deep down in my heart, I want to be rich and die rich. But please, don't judge me so early, ladies and gentlemen. I just want to be as rich as most of you are. Imagine a student, like me. She has to struggle every year for her scholarship, which is just enough to pay for the food and rent.

As of the very first sentence, which begins with "I", the orator places herself in the spotlight. She invokes her emotions ("I am really scared"; "I'm afraid"), and uses herself as an example ("Imagine a student like me"). This passage also illustrates the use of emotion (pathos), as a form of argument, as well as the illusion of talking directly to the audience. Debating tournaments particularly lend themselves to this sort of personal staging of the speaker.

Table 8.2 sums up expressions in English that help inscribe the speaker in the language of the speech and, in so doing, construe a personal ethos. Some can appear in emphatic cleft structures beginning with "what":

> What I find particularly interesting here is that…
>   What I would like to look at here is…

These cleft constructions create the feeling that you are highly motivated by what you are saying, and that you know in exactly what direction your speech is going. They therefore help construe not only a personal but also an authoritative ethos.

Table 8.2 Language that introduces a personal tone

I + verbs to introduce the topic of the speech	I'm going to I'd like to I want to I plan to I will	discuss focus on examine investigate revisit, share with you, mention suggest
I + verbs expressing emotion or opinion:	I'm interesting in this topic because… I feel strongly about this topic because… For me, this is an important/key aspect to understanding (e.g. this author…) This struck me as an important issue… I was surprised/struck by the fact that… This appeals to me because…	
"I believe" (reference to a belief system):	I've built a work platform that organizes work across organisations, because *I believe* that is where work is heading. *I also believe* that each organisation has a unique way of doing things. (Investor pitch)	
Adverbs/adverbial groups that announce an opinion:	Honestly/frankly To be honest/frank …	

2   Speaking in the Name of a Community (Collective Ethos)

Debating is one public speaking genre where it is important to speak not only in your own name but also in that of your team. You and your team members need to speak as one voice, and show solidarity towards one another. Thanks to expressions such as "As my colleague Peter has said" or "As my friends Jeremy and Anna have underlined", the discourse construes a community—as well as an ethos that is no longer individual but "collective".

In some genres, it is in fact more important to place the spotlight on the community than on the individual speaker. This is the case for sales pitches, where potential investors want to be reassured and see that the different team members work efficiently, bringing their different talents

together to work in the same direction. This is illustrated in the following extract from a winning investor pitch (see also Chap. 21):

> *We*'ve built a web-based work platform that organizes work across people and across organisations, because *we believe* that is where work is heading. *We also believe* that each organisation has a unique way of doing things, so *we*'ve just built the platform on which you build the functionality and the applications. Whether it's for organizing a meeting, events, sharing your tasks or fixing your box, you get a tool that works like you, not the contrary. *We* want to become your platform for work like Facebook is for your social life.[2]

In this extract, there is no reference to "I": all first-person reference is in the plural form "we", which appears eight times in the full speech. "We" combines with verbs that, when taken all together, paint the picture of a team working together efficiently, for example "We've built a web-based platform…" and "we've just built the platform…" In addition, there are several uses of "we believe", which point to a community based on shared values and a shared vision. Indeed, "we believe" brings into sharp focus the underlying ideology that is fostered in marketing discourse, where it is important to show that you are motivated not just by financial but also by ethical concerns.

3   Referring to the Here and Now

Up until now the focus has been on referring directly to discourse participants—that is, the speaker and the audience. This is achieved mainly by using first- and second-person pronouns ("I", "you", "we"). These pronouns belong to the grammatical category of deictics. Deictics are words whose referent varies and depends directly on the communication context. They are therefore frequent in conversation. As well as the participants of the exchange, the category includes space and time reference, such as "here", "today", "tomorrow", "yesterday" and "now", as well as phrases based on demonstrative pronouns or determiners ("this", "that", "these", "those"). Such time and place deictics inscribe your speech in the here and now of the context of delivery and further serve to anchor it.

Time and place deictics play a key role in attention-getters:

> My fellow citizens, I stand here today, humbled by the task before us, grateful for the trust you have bestowed, mindful of the sacrifices borne by our ancestors. (B. Obama, inaugural, 2009)

This speech opening contains a high frequency of deictics, which refer to participants ("my", "I", "us", "you", "our"), space ("here") and time ("today"). The expression "I stand here today"—like other commonly used expressions, for example "I stand here before you", "We are gathered here", "I say", amplifies not only the illusion of a dialogue with the audience, but also the credibility of the speaker. The speaker comes across as totally present and committed to the oratory moment. In contexts of elaborate orality (cf. Chap. 5), deictics are an excellent way to symbolically reduce the gap between the moment when the script was written and the moment of delivery, and (re)connect the text of the speech with the direct context in which it is delivered. The textuality of the speech therefore coincides personally, spatially and temporally with the context of delivery.

Deictics are a way of enacting *Kairos*, a concept long developed in rhetoric. Kairos refers to a sense of opportunity, of seizing the right moment. It is closely linked to ethos: you embody your speech by appearing as the right person in exactly the right place at the right time. In the case of Obama's inaugural address, the new president carves out a place for himself—and his speech—in history (cf. "our ancestors"). As members of the audience, we have the sense of history in the making.

One of the most famous examples of inscribing time and place in the textuality of a speech is provided by Abraham Lincoln's Gettysburg address. Delivered during the American Civil War to consecrate the cemetery on the place of battle, it is a speech of commemoration, an example of epideictic oratory (cf. Chap. 2). It is one of the most famous funeral orations of all time. But more to the point here, the speech is considered to have marked a turning point in the way the English language is used, ushering in a more modern, streamlined oratory style. It is a *tour de force* in concision. We are struck by the frequency of deictics as well as phrases containing a deictic use of a demonstrative (in italics in the quotes below).

The speech begins with both first-person ("our") and demonstrative ("this") reference:

> Fourscore and seven years ago *our fathers* brought forth on *this continent* a new nation, conceived in liberty and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal.

The speech continues with reference to the here and now ("now"; "here") while maintaining a strong link to the first person ("we"):

> Now *we* are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation or any nation so conceived and so dedicated can long endure. *We* are met on a great battlefield of that war. *We* have come to dedicate a portion of that field as a final resting-place for those who *here* gave their lives that that nation might live. It is altogether fitting and proper that *we* should do this.

Lincoln stages the delivery as coinciding with the place of battle ("this ground"; "here"), and this becomes the focus point of the speech:

> But, in a larger sense, *we* cannot dedicate, *we* cannot consecrate, *we* cannot hallow *this ground*. The brave men, living and dead who struggled *here* have consecrated it far above *our poor power to add or detract*. The world will little note nor long remember what *we* say *here*, but it can never forget what they did *here*.

The same theme is developed in the final two sentences, the last of which is particularly long:

> It is for *us* the living rather to be dedicated *here* to the unfinished work which they who fought *here* have thus far so nobly advanced. It is rather for *us* to be *here* dedicated to the great task remaining before *us*—that from *these honored dead* we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion—that *we here* highly resolve that *these dead* shall not have died in vain, that *this nation* under God shall have a new birth of freedom, and that government of the people, by the people, for the people shall not perish from the earth. (Abraham Lincoln, The Gettysburg address, 19 November 1863[3])

To sum up, the Gettysburg draws on the full spectrum of deictic reference:

– first-person reference ("we", "us", "our") in all sentences except for one;
– the adverb "here" occurs eight times and refers to the place where Lincoln delivers the speech: this place is all the more important as it is the battleground being consecrated, and the repetition of "here" reinforces the act of consecration, particularly when used contrastively ("The world will little note nor long remember what *we say* here, but it can never forget what *they did* here"); as it happens, Gettysburg has gone done in history just as much as Lincoln's address (often simply referred to as "The Gettysburg") as the battle itself;
– the demonstratives "this" and "these": the nominal phrases "these honoured dead" and "these dead" incorporate a spatial meaning, as they refer to those who died at the exact spot where the speech was given; a chain of reference is created between "this continent", "this ground" and, in the last sentence, "this nation"; in these examples, the demonstratives turn otherwise abstract entities (e.g. "nation") into more concrete ones; at the same time, their repeated use, when spoken out loud, creates a sense of tension and urgency.

The speech contains the famous figure of repetition "government of the people, by the people, for the people" in the last sentence. This final sentence is unusually long in comparison to the other sentences of the speech. However, it cannot be said that its length threatens listenability. This is thanks to figures of repetition (cf. Chap. 15), but also to the deictics, which receive sentence stress in English and, when used frequently, set up a regular rhythm.

Because political speeches are intended to make news—and even history—they particularly exploit reference to the here and now. However, such a resource proves useful whatever the speech genre, as illustrated in this company presentation that could be given at a trade fair (deictics in bold):

Our company, "Letsjam", makes jams and other canned fruit products. *We* believe in responsible trade, and work with local farmers and local employment agencies. *We* began two years ago, and *we*'ve grown by fifty percent each year. *Today*, *our* turnover is at 900,000 euros. *We* are currently focusing on developing our network of outlets. *So far this month*, twenty new retailers have signed up with *us*. *In this state*, *we* have signed up four, but *we* are targeting at least two more *by the end of this trade fair*.

Speeches that serve to introduce guest speakers generally contain a high rate of deictics. These contribute to the hype and build-up to the moment when the guest takes the floor, as illustrated in the example provided below.

Example: Introducing a guest speaker
    Ladies and gentlemen, it's *my* pleasure to welcome *you here today* to the tenth annual national conference of the Association of Applied Biologists. Speaking on behalf of the organisers, *I*'d like to say that *we*'re delighted by the record turnout *this year*. *This lecture theatre* has never been so packed. Our association is continuing to grow. This growth is a clear indication that *we* have all understood the importance of sharing information, of collaborating, of working together, in a field that has become essential in the face of the environmental challenges *our* world is facing.
    This morning, I am delighted to welcome one of the leaders in *our* field. Dr. Brown is Head of Entomology at the University of London. She is also Curator of Hemiptera at the National Museum, where she is responsible for an insect collection that consists of over a million species. *Today*, she is going to talk to *us* about the new challenges that *we*, as applied biologists, now face. So, *I*'d like *you* to join *me* in welcoming to the podium *our* keynote speaker, Dr. Wendy Brown.

Table 8.3 sums up the language that inscribes the here and now in the speech.

Table 8.3 Language that inscribes the here and now in the speech

Time reference to date or moment in the day:	Today
	This morning
	This afternoon
	Tonight
	We're going to introduce *today* iPad 2 (Steve Jobs)
	If there is anyone out there who still doubts that America is a place where all things are possible, who still wonders if the dream of our founders is alive in our time, who still questions the power of our democracy, *tonight* is your answer. (Barack Obama, victory speech, 2008)
More narrow time reference:	At/in this (very) moment
	At/in this instant
	At this minute
	In this grave hour, perhaps the most fateful in *our* history… (King George V)
Wider time reference:	This week, this month, this year, this century…
Simultaneity expressed via a time adverbial:	As I speak
	As I stand here
	Since I've been talking to you, the lives of four people have been saved.
More or less narrow spatial reference:	Here
	This city/country
	This university…

Notes

1. Semi-final of the debating tournament of the French Debating Association, 2012.
2. Winning speech delivered at the MIT Start-up weekend in 2010; transcribed from video retrieved from http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UBNJh2rOOlI.
3. During the delivery itself, Abraham Lincoln did not read from a fully written script but reportedly spoke from a few notes. It was afterwards that he reproduced a written version for posterity. Several written versions of the speech exist, and the most frequently quoted has been reproduced here. While this text does not coincide word for word with what Lincoln actually said on the day, it corresponds to the mark he wanted to leave on

English oratory. For a detailed discussion of the different written versions that are available for the Gettysburg address, from which this text is taken, see G. Wills (1992) *Lincoln at Gettysburg. The Words that Remade America*. New York: Somon & Schuster.

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9

Rhetorical Staging

1   Integrating the Audience into a Wider Community

The Gettysburg address (cf. Chap. 8) presents a number of differences with most of the other speeches quoted up until now in this book. The speech was cited for its use of deictics. However, while deictics are a common feature of conversation, they are so numerous in the Gettysburg that the effect is far from that of conversation and, instead, suggests, alongside the figures of speech based on repetition (e.g. "we cannot dedicate, we cannot consecrate, we cannot hallow this ground"; "government of the people, by the people, for the people"), rhetorical amplification. The tone of the speech is far from chatty and far from the modern-day casual and friendly ethos synonymous with Anglo-Saxon culture. There is none of the language of conversation (e.g. interrogatives, terms of address, stance-taking markers) that would simulate a dialogue between speaker and audience, and the orator never says "I": the numerous first-person references take the form of the plural collective "we".

In terms of the fundamental asymmetry (cf. Chap. 3) that characterises the speaker–audience relation in the context of public speaking, the

Gettysburg contains no staging of an interaction that would symbolically reduce the distance between speaker and audience in order to place them on the same level. Rather, the language choices noted above belong to the opposite strategy. According to a set-up that will be referred to here as *Rhetorical Staging*, the asymmetry is, on the contrary, reinforced (again, symbolically): the speaker does not engage directly with the audience and maintains a distance. He/she rises to a higher status, above that of the audience, to embody through the discourse that of leader of the community.

Thanks to this higher status, the speaker acts as a sort of mediator between the live audience and a wider community (e.g. the nation), integrating one into the other and generating in the live audience a sense of belonging to the wider community. A strong connection is established with the audience because they feel uplifted and part of a higher entity. Somewhat paradoxically, emotion is infused and a strong connection made thanks to the higher status of the speaker and the distance separating him/her from the audience.

Rhetorical Staging is closely associated with the grand, declamatory oratory of the past—the "fiery oratory" to which political communications specialist Kathleen Hall Jamieson (1984) makes reference, and which has taken a back seat since the paradigm shift that occurred during the twentieth century due to the influence of the electronic media, where "conversing" with a TV audience became the new model for politicians (cf. Hall Jamieson cites President Reagan's then new, intimate style). Now, in an age where politicians seek to communicate directly (e.g. via websites, Facebook, Twitter, etc.), Rhetorical Staging provides them with a set-up which, as it were, reinstates them in their role of political leader. Rhetorical Staging is particularly linked to the celebration of the community and commemoration that characterise epideictic oratory. In the Gettysburg, integration into an overarching community is construed from the very beginning:

> Fourscore and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent a new nation, conceived in liberty and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal.

Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation or any nation so conceived and so dedicated can long endure. We are met on a great battlefield of that war. We have come to dedicate a portion of that field as a final resting-place for those who here gave their lives that that nation might live. It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this.

The speech is launched by referring to the past ("fourscore and seven years ago") and to the common history of the overarching community; in so doing, the moment marked by the speech itself appears as part of this shared history. There is an epic, larger-than-life feel. Unlike a conversation for example, the pertinence of the speech goes well beyond the context at hand: the speaker "rises above" the immediate context of delivery, and the list of potential addressees does not stop at the live audience. The overarching community is reinforced in the noun phrase "that nation" by the distancing use of "that" instead of "this"; the community is associated with universal values (cf. reference to "*all men* are created equal") and is hence presented as an entity greater than the country itself. And the repeated use of "we" unites the audience tightly together in order to be incorporated into this community.

The main characteristics of Rhetorical Staging are as follows:

1. A speaker who rises above the audience to address a community that extends beyond the live audience and into which the live audience is incorporated;
2. Reference to time and place that go beyond the direct context of delivery, construed in conjunction with a high frequency of deictics (e.g. "here");
3. Figures of speech based on repetition, which contrast with the language of conversation and create a distancing, rhetorical and, often, epic style; these are enhanced during delivery via pausing and vocal variation (e.g. contrasts in speed and loudness/softness of voice).

Rhetorical Staging construes the ethos of a leader, and is therefore most valuable in political speeches. It also construes the solemnity of great occasions: it corresponds to the grand rhetoric of a speaker-leader who rises to the occasion at a deciding moment in history—as in Winston

Churchill's war speeches (e.g. "we shall fight on the beaches, we shall fight on the landing grounds […] we shall never surrender"), where it reinforces the sense of history in the making. Martin Luther King's "I have a dream" speech also exemplifies Rhetorical Staging.

Occasionally, this set-up is an integral part of the speech genre, as in the inaugural address (see President Kennedy's inaugural, Chap. 2), whereby the newly elected president takes his place among the list of presidents who have preceded him. There is also a close affinity between Rhetorical Staging and speeches of commemoration, as illustrated by the Gettysburg. In these cases, Rhetorical Staging is part of the generic scene (cf. Chap. 3). However, Rhetorical Staging can be part of other genres, where it corresponds to a choice by the speaker at the level of the scenography. It can appear periodically, creating "rhetorical moments" within a speech, and/or can allow the speaker to generate solemnity and an epic feel in a speech genre where it is not necessarily expected. This is what Barack Obama and Steve Jobs, respectively, did in speeches that are discussed briefly in the following sections.

2   An Example of a Political Campaign Speech

While politicians typically engage, for example, with Rhetorical Staging in inaugural addresses and speeches of commemoration, it is quite rare that they do so in the context of a campaign speech. But this is what Barack Obama did during the 2007 Democrat primaries, in a speech that is said to have proved decisive in turning the tables on Hillary Clinton, the front-runner at the time in the polls for the Democrat ticket. Both candidates spoke alongside the other Democrat candidates at a fund-raising dinner for the Democrat party. Obama's speech contained the catchphrase "Our moment is now", one of the less-frequently quoted slogans of the 2007 campaign compared to others (e.g. "Yes we can"). The catchphrase appears three times in three consecutive sentences at the beginning of the peroration (the build-up to the end of the speech):

> As President, I will end the war in Iraq. We will have our troops home in sixteen months. I will close Guantanamo, I will restore habeas corpus, I will finish the fight against Al Qaeda and I will lead the world to combat the common threats of the twenty-first century: nuclear weapons and terrorism, climate change and poverty, genocide and disease.
>
> And I will send, I will send once more a message to those yearning faces beyond our shores that says: "You matter to us. Your future is our future. And our moment is now".
>
> America, our moment is now. Our moment is now [applause]. (B. Obama, Jefferson Jackson Dinner speech, Des Moines, IA, November 10, 2007)[1]

In this passage, Obama attempts, as it were, to "rise above" the immediate context of delivery. The network of potential addressees does not stop at the live audience; it extends to the nation and to the world at large. Obama explicitly addresses a message "to those yearning faces beyond our shores". He then addresses the nation, announcing via the apostrophe "America" that he is returning to home shores.[2] The live audience is given the sense that they are part of these two larger entities. The monumental feel is reinforced by the material staging of the speech. In the enormous sports centre where the fund-raising dinner takes place, the orator's face is projected on multiple giant screens.

And just like in the Gettysburg, specific deictics are repeated: the catchphrase "our moment is now" brings together the two deictic markers (which rhyme) "our" and "now". The catchphrase is said three times, and the solemnity is enhanced by Obama's voice, which becomes softer and slows down, with marked pauses before each repetition. Other figures of speech appear earlier, in the form of accumulation ("nuclear weapons and terrorism, climate change and poverty…") and repetition (the anaphora "I will"; repetition of the one-liner "our moment is now").

Thanks to Rhetorical Staging, Obama construes the ethos of a leader, and reinforces the credibility of his candidacy. His speech contrasts with that delivered at the same event by Hillary Clinton. Clinton conforms to the speech format expected at the event (a fund-raising dinner that is a traditional part of the Democrat primaries), where the audience is

encouraged to participate via the chanting of slogans inscribed on banners that they simultaneously brandish. Her speech contains a long passage which goes well beyond the staging (or representation) of an interaction with the audience observed in examples quoted up until now in this book:

> Clinton: […] So, when the Republicans stand by and watch rising gas prices and rising health care costs and increase in college tuition and falling housing prices, and struggling families, and they have turned China into our banker, what are we going to do?
>   Audience: Turn up the heat!
>   Clinton: And we Democrats, we believe that every child has a God-given potential that we want to help unlock. So, when the Republicans cut Head Start, and refuse to fix No Child Left Behind? What do we do?
>   Audience: Turn up the heat!
>   Clinton: And when we Democrats fight for universal health care and the Republicans veto health care for children and then let the insurance companies and the drug companies undermine health care for the rest of us, what do we do?
>   Audience: Turn up the heat! (H. Clinton, Jefferson Jackson Dinner speech, Des Moines, IA, November 10, 2007)[3]

Here, Clinton does not simply simulate an interaction with an audience who must remain silent. She generates a real moment of vocal interaction via a series of questions to which they respond. She uses a rising intonation pattern and pauses after each question, which are the cues for the audience to respond by yelling out the slogan "turn up the heat!". Of course, the interaction is formatted and the audience can only reply with the slogan, but this is probably as close as public speaking that involves such a large audience can come to interaction. What is interesting is that, if the reported change in the polls that followed the event is anything to go by, this type of interaction did not seem to serve the speaker's purpose here. In other words, there are contexts, even if they are in the minority these days, where direct interaction with the audience—or simulating/staging it—does not prove to be the right choice for the speaker.

3   A Product Launch: Steve Jobs Presents the First Macintosh Computer

Rhetorical Staging informs the opening lines of the speech that launched the first Macintosh computer in 1984. Instead of staging an interaction, the speech begins with a third-person, epic-like narrative that recounts the history of computing and presents it as a war between the two main computing companies of the time (cf. warrior vocabulary, e.g. "IBM is aiming its guns […] on Apple"):

> It is 1958. IBM passes up the chance to buy a young, fledgling company that has just invented a new technology, called Xerography. Two years later, Xerox is born, and IBM has been kicking themselves ever since.
>
> It is 10 years later, the late 60s. Digital equipment corporation and others invent the mini computer. IBM dismisses the mini computer as too small to do serious computing, and therefore unimportant to their business. DEC grows to become a multi-hundred million dollar corporation before IBM finally enters the mini computer market.
>
> It is now 10 years later, the late 70s. In 1977, Apple, a young, fledgling company on the West Coast invents the Apple 2, the first personal computer as we know it today. IBM dismisses the personal computer as too small to do serious computing and therefore unimportant to their business.
>
> The early 1980s. 1981. Apple 2 has become the world's most popular computer and Apple has grown to a 300 million dollar corporation. (S. Jobs, Keynote, Macintosh launch, 1984)[4]

The narrative is organised around a series of landmark dates ("It is 1958"; "It is 10 years later, the late 60s"[…]; "It is now 1984"), and is related dramatically using the present tense, instead of the preterit (past) tense which is the regular narrative tense in English. The discourse is highly structured around forms of repetition. One sentence is repeated several times at intervals (and will be repeated further in the rest of the speech): "IBM dismisses the mini computer as too small to do serious computing, and therefore unimportant to their business"; the content of this sentence is enhanced by marked pauses and variation in speed during the delivery. First-person pronouns and interactive forms are absent—save for the two

(rhetorical) questions which announce the screening of the now infamous ad which plays on Orwellian and dystopian imagery to attack IBM (with a totalitarian image of Big Brother parodying IBM's "Big Blue" nickname):

> […] It is now 1984. It appears IBM wants it all. Apple is perceived to be the only hope to offer IBM a run for its money. […] IBM wants it all and is aiming its guns on its last obstacle to industry control, Apple. Will Big Blue dominate the entire computer industry, the entire information age? Was George Orwell right? [Screening of Video]

For this product launch that some would claim made history, Jobs exploits a number of elements that belong to Rhetorical Staging. While there is no explicit reference to a wider community, the speaker "takes the higher ground", as it were, and rises above his audience to recount a story of epic proportions and inscribe the product launch—and with it the audience that witnesses it—within this epic narrative. This is achieved via an elaborate, highly structured script that includes figures of repetition and vocal variation. Interestingly, Jobs reads this speech from behind a pulpit and in no way attempts to appear spontaneous. Later on in the product launch, this set-up gives way to staged interaction via more casual and interactive language that is closer to the style that we have come to associate with Jobs.

As illustrated in this last example, Rhetorical Staging can be used to dramatically launch a speech, before it then gives way to staged interaction. Alternatively, a speaker can decide to introduce it in specific parts of a speech. And, finally, echoes of the set-up can in fact be identified as soon as interactive forms of language are replaced by figures of speech: as will be examined in Chap. 15, these play a major role in construing an authoritative ethos.

Notes

1. Transcribed from video retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tydfsfSQiYc.

2. The apostrophe (from the Greek *apostrophos*—"turn away from") is a figure that typically allows the speaker to turn away from the live audience to address a third entity. Here, however, there is a variation, as "America" refers to an entity that goes beyond the direct audience but nevertheless includes it (i.e. the Democrats attending this fundraising dinner).

3. Transcribed from video retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k35vOREtkVo.

4. Transcribed from video retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1tQ5XwvjPmA.

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10

Delivery, or *Actio*

In addition to the language itself, staging an interaction is also achieved via non-verbal, or paralinguistic, means, which are discussed in the following two chapters. This chapter deals with general issues of delivery, while Chap. 11 addresses those that pertain more specifically to the slideshow.

1   Speech as Performance

Delivery coincides with the fundamental component in classical rhetoric of *actio*, which has principally to do with the "elocution of the body" and vocalics. Delivery concerns the physical packaging of the speech, and has taken on a particularly prominent role in contemporary public speaking practice. Whatever the genre, you need to approach the exercise of public speaking as "speech as performance": that is, a presentation that is staged in front of spectators, within a particular scenery or stage design (i.e. scenography in the common sense of the term).

According to communication experts, 93% of meaning perceived by an addressee depends on paralinguistic features (e.g. body language, eye contact and voice), while only 7% of meaning depends on the words

themselves. A landmark study carried out over 50 years ago by Mehrabian and Ferris (1967)—the same year that McLuhan's *The Medium is the Message* (or "Massage", a choice of term that insisted on the sensory effects of the medium) was first published—break these weightings down further as follows: 7% word content; 38% vocalic; 55% body language.[1] As such, these figures underline that if you do not master the physical aspects of the delivery of your speech, the chances are that you will not succeed in getting your message across.

2   Body Language

Body language, the principal means to em*body* one's speech, is conditioned by a number of practical considerations that make up the scenography associated with a specific genre. Before any speech, you need to decide what you are going to *do with* your body and ask yourself the following types of questions:

– Will I be sitting or standing?
– If I am standing, will I have a pulpit on which I can place my written script, computer or tablet?
– Am I expected to move about on the stage? If so, when would be the best moments to do this? And when should I stay still?
– Will I use a microphone? If so, what type? (For example, a static microphone, wired to a pulpit or stand, a wireless, hand-held microphone, headset, or lapel-microphone?) At what distance from my mouth do I hold it?[2] Will this limit my movement on the stage, and my hand movements?
– If a slideshow is expected, will I use a key on my computer or a remote to pass from one slide to another?
– If there is a slideshow, how will I stand so that I can see in turn my notes, the screen, and the audience?
– If I want to move about the stage, are there cables that need to be avoided?
– What will I do with my hands (e.g. keep them positioned on the desktop/the pulpit)?

This list gives an idea of the range of practical details that need to be taken into consideration prior to your speech-as-performance. You will feel comfortable as you deliver your speech, and you will secure your credibility as a speaker, by showing the audience that you know what you are doing, and that you master the situation and the genre, from the very moment you step onto the stage.

In terms of body language, semioticians have analysed and categorised different types of hand gestures, distinguishing between the following:

– *figurative gestures*, which mime/imitate the meaning being expressed verbally;
– *evocative gestures*, which show or point to an object;
– *ideational gestures*, which serve to punctuate the speech, such as those that accompany the expression of a new point, a new example, and so on;
– *parasite gestures*, which serve to relieve stress and tension, such as touching one's hair, tapping a desk with a pen and so on.

If parasite gestures are too frequent, they will communicate uneasiness and a lack of control. If you are conscious of the fact, or have been told that you make a lot of parasite gestures with your hands while talking in public, you can try one of the following strategies:

– Cue in with the script of your speech a number of the other types of gestures, and practise making them until they come naturally;
– Decide to immobilise your hands for the entire length of your speech by, for example, placing them firmly palms down on the pulpit or desktop in front of you, using them to hold something (a prompter, your notes, a prop etc.), and so on.

Deciding to place your hands firmly on the desk or pulpit has the added benefit of stabilising your entire body. Leaning over a desktop, with elbows out, conveys a sense of control. What is more, this type of posture triggers self-confidence, according to the thesis defended by Amy Cuddy in a now-popular TED talk about the influence of posture and body language on the chemicals of the brain.[3]

It is better to avoid continual movement about the stage, which will also be interpreted as a sign of stress and a lack of self-control. Ideally, you should stand still for most of the speech, introducing some variety by moving to a different part of the stage for each transition within your speech—that is, cuing into the script a movement that signals that you are beginning a new part of your speech.

3   Eye Contact and Reading from a Script

As underlined previously (cf. Chap. 5), in contexts of elaborate orality when you read from a written script, you run the danger of not being able to make enough eye contact with your audience, and of making them feel excluded. Reading from a script requires technique and practice, so that you look up from it regularly to look at your audience. And you really need to *take in* your audience, and look methodically from one audience member to another rather than cast vague glances around the room. Experts advise that speakers look at a specific member of the audience for three seconds, before moving on to another one. This technique can also be used when the assembly is very large. Another technique used by performers in show business consists is choosing one or two audience members to focus on for the entire performance. This is not advised in the context of public speaking, where the aim, particularly in contemporary formats, is to create a connection with the entire audience. Many of us have felt left out of a speech when the speaker seems to be only talking to one part of the assembly. A typical example is the case of the student who only looks at the teacher. In formal interactive contexts (e.g. interviews involving more than one interviewee, round-table sessions), it is particularly important to take everyone in. Whether you have the main role of leading the discussion or are simply participating in it, taking in the entire panel conveys the message that you are fully taking part in the proceedings. The audience will therefore be more likely themselves to take in (or "absorb" in this case) what you say when you come to make a contribution, because it will appear pertinent to the context.

4   The Layout of Your Script

You will only be able to look up from your script at regular intervals if the words are set out clearly on the page or screen. If the layout resembles that of a written text and the text is too dense—for example, sentences follow one after the other, without indenting or separation into short blocks of text—the likelihood is that you will lose your spot when you look up from the script.

You can decide, like Presiding Bishop Michael Curry (cf. Chap. 2), to read not from a paper but from a tablet, but this requires great familiarity with your text, and is also best kept for when you have a pulpit on which to rest (and hide) the tablet. Another option is to write your speech on "palm cards"—small cards that can be virtually hidden in the palm of your hand.

There are a number of technical possibilities at your disposal to create a user-friendly layout and make your speech easier to perform. Some of these techniques are illustrated in the layout presented in Fig. 10.1. For example:

– Begin every new sentence on a new line;
– Use slashes to indicate pauses, and double slashes to cue in longer, marked pauses (see discussion below on pauses);
– Underline words that deserve to be stressed.

These are conventions that have been developed by newsreaders since the beginning of radio broadcast. Other possibilities include varying font size and/or using bold typeface in order to represent voice variation, particularly at key parts of the speech (e.g. the *captatio*).

5   Vocalics

As also underlined in Part I of this book, when public speaking involves a written script, whether it is learnt off by heart or read, it poses the challenge of listenability—of making the words sound oral. Similarly,

How many pairs of shoes do you think a woman has on average? /

Ten? / Fifteen? / Twenty? //

Well, according to a fashion blog I was reading recently, a woman has on average <u>twenty-seven</u> pairs of shoes in her dressing room.

During her lifetime, she will spend <u>40,000 euros</u> on shoes.

But, she only regularly wears <u>five pairs</u>.

Out of these five pairs, <u>one brand</u> crops up again and again. /

A brand that is <u>casual</u> and <u>up-beat</u>. /

A brand that has recently made a <u>come-back</u> and is <u>retro</u>. /

A brand that has adopted for its emblem the <u>star</u>. /

You've guessed, haven't you? //

Yes, I'm talking about <u>Converse shoes</u>.

Now, you may wonder why Converse shoes are <u>so popular</u>.

<u>Put on your shoes</u> and come on a <u>walk</u> with me to understand why.

First, here's some <u>history</u>. / [...]

Fig. 10.1 Example of a script layout

Abraham Lincoln reportedly read his speech out loud to "think his way into sounds". This means choosing words and word sequences that appeal to the ear, by taking into account euphony (the sounds themselves) and prosody (rhythm), both of which are to be enhanced at the moment of delivery via various vocal effects.

Conversational Versus Declamatory Speaking Style

Due to technical advances, speaking style underwent major transformations during the twentieth century. Imagine what it must have been like to address an audience of at least several hundred people, outside among

the elements, *without a microphone* and the effort required to have your voice heard. You would have needed to speak particularly loudly and slowly throughout your speech. Thanks to microphones, speakers do not need to put as much energy into projecting their voice, and they no longer have to speak loudly and slowly. The microphone has contributed to the "conversationalisation" of public speaking. As speaking coach Denise Graveline (2013) puts it, microphones have allowed for vocal subtlety, as well as the possibility of "quiet": with the microphone and recorded sound, which both emerged in the 1870s, "[t]he dynamics of entertainment allowed for quiet. A different sort of voice found its place on stage." Speakers can now adopt a style close to that of conversation, speeding up and slowing down as it suits them, and speaking more softly in parts to feign intimacy—a strategy adopted in some of the new public speaking formats promulgated by the Internet. This conversational speaking style contrasts with the declamatory speaking style that developed prior to the microphone.

You can grasp the difference between the two styles by listening to a TED talk and the recording of a political speech from the first half of the twentieth century (e.g. Franklin Roosevelt, Winston Churchill). Even speeches dating from 60 years ago, such as John F. Kennedy's inaugural address, were being delivered according to the earlier speaking style. Kennedy's first sentence is indicative of his speaking style throughout the speech (stressed syllables are indicated by capital letters, and pauses by slashes (/)):

> We observe today / not a VICtory of party / but a celebration of FREEdom, / symbolizing an END, / as well as a beGINning, / signifying reNEWal, / as well as CHANGE. /

The effect is that of a slow, deliberate and emphatic speaking style, which is realised via the following means:

– The extract contains systematic pausing (i.e. at extremely regular intervals) at most syntactic frontiers within the sentence (i.e. between each phrase), with pauses lasting between 1.5 and 2 seconds each;

- These pauses separate out each tone unit, creating regular emphasis via a number of tonic syllables (the final stressed syllable of each tone unit—printed here in capital letters);
- Each tonic syllable coincides with a fall–rise intonation pattern, which, for the ear, unifies the tone units into a whole.

The same phenomena characterise the opening line of Martin Luther King's famous 1963 "I have a dream" speech:

> I am happy to JOIN with you today / in what will go down in HIStory / as the greatest demonstration for FREEdom / in the history of our NAtion. /

This slow, declamatory style not only allows speakers to pace themselves and project their voice, but also communicates a sense of ceremony and grandeur synonymous with Rhetorical Staging (cf. Chap. 9), the predominant model of oratory over the period when the style developed. Moreover, regular pausing construes power. Today, a rate of one pause for every seven words is recommended for specific types of political speeches. Declamatory style, or some of its components, can still be implemented today in certain speech genres to introduce solemnity, for example during large-scale political meetings and also in some church settings.

Variation in Volume and Speed

A famous passage from the classical treaty *Letter to Herennius* (III, 22) underlines the fact that "the auditor needs variety". Whether the style is conversational or declamatory, an essential part of *actio* is vocal variation. Variation serves to maintain the audience's attention, and, at times, entertain. There are two main ways to introduce variation in your voice: (i) vary the volume (loud vs. soft); (ii) vary the speed (faster vs. slow, including use of dramatic pauses).

Both types of variation are exploited, often simultaneously, in Martin Luther King's speech, which presents a *tour de force* in vocal variation, in terms of both type and frequency. While, as we saw earlier, Dr King launches his speech in a slow, declamatory speaking style, he quickly

introduces variation, increasing his speed progressively, and moving from 92 words per minute at the beginning of the speech to 145 words per minute at the end (Lucas 2015: 244).[4] Vocal variation kicks in as of the fifth sentence of the speech, in conjunction with the first instance of repetition, which involves the segment "one hundred years later":

> *But one hundred years later*, we must face the tragic fact that the Negro is still not free. One hundred years later… *One hundred years later*, […].

With each repetition of "One hundred years later", Dr King's voice gets louder and faster, contributing to a build-up in emotion and triggering a response from the audience at the end of the series of repetition in the form of applause and cheering. As will be discussed in Chap. 15, repetition provides the prime materiality for vocal variation, which is one of the main reasons for introducing repetition into the scripting of a speech.

When Martin Luther King simultaneously increases the volume and speed of his voice, he becomes more "passionate", to use the classification adopted by Donovan (2014: 143), who characterises the different tones produced when volume and speed combine. For instance, a voice that is both loud and slow—which is the case in declamatory speaking style—produces a tone qualified as "authoritative".

The extent of the vocal variation in Martin Luther King's speech is quite exceptional. Within the conversational speaking style of modern-day public speaking, variation in voice is exploited more spasmodically. And as soon as you introduce variation that involves lowering your voice, or speeding up, or both at once, which, according to Table 10.1, produces a suspenseful (or enthralling) tone, you run the risk of becoming inaudible. On the other hand, a soft voice associated with a slow speed can be used at key moments of a speech to create complicity with the audience as it produces a "calming", or intimate and confiding tone (Donovan, Ibid.).

Table 10.1 Volume and speed: Four characteristic tones

Loud	Authoritative	Passionate
Soft	Calming	Suspenseful
	Slow	Fast

Let us remember that two of the most common problems with delivery are the following:

1. Speaking too fast;
2. Speaking too softly.

Due to the stress of being on stage with the eyes of the audience upon us, we all tend to speak faster than we would normally and faster than when we rehearse a speech beforehand. Once on the stage on D-day, considerable effort needs to be made to slow down and keep the average pace slow.

Pausing

Good delivery is not only about speaking slowly, but also about pausing. As noted earlier, in declamatory speaking style, pausing is extremely regular. In conversational style, pauses will be used intermittently. They serve a number of functions:

– They allow you to bide time while you are looking for your words (this makes a better impression than saying "um" or "er");
– They provide the audience with some respite and give them a moment to "rest" their ears;
– They help as stopping to pause works as a cue for audience response, often in the form of applause;
– They create suspense;
– They add emphasis to what has just been said previously.

Creating suspense and adding emphasis make for what are frequently referred to as "dramatic pauses". Dramatic pauses construe solemnity, to quote the exchange between King George VI and the king's speech therapist in the film *The King's Speech*[5]:

– Long pauses are good, they add solemnity to great occasions
– Then I am the solemnist king that ever lived

For pauses to be effective, they need to last for at least three seconds, although "the sound of silence" for this length of time can prove uncomfortable for speakers. Inserting dramatic pauses therefore requires practice, and it is better if you plan them in advance and clearly indicate them in your script (e.g. by using double slashes (//) as in Fig. 10.1).

Notes

1. This study remains famous and highlights the role of non-verbal communication, but it is worth pointing out that it was based on an experiment that did not take into consideration pragmatic parameters: participants were asked to interpret isolated words pronounced according to different intonation patterns by other participants who had not chosen the words themselves and for whom there was no construal of meaning in context.
2. If using a microphone, you should, according to experts, hold it at a length of 15 centimeters (6 inches) from your mouth.
3. https://www.ted.com/talks/amy_cuddy_your_body_language_shapes_who_you_are.
4. The same study indicates that the average speed of a political speech (in the U.S. context) is between 120 and 150 words per minute.
5. *The King's Speech*, 2010, directed by Tom Hooper and written by David Seidler, based on the play of the same name.

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11

Slide Shows that Reinforce the Interaction

1   The Dangers of the Slide Show

These days, we are struck by the many instances of public speaking that include a slide show. The sideshow is a key feature of the genres belonging to the New Oratory. It is also virtually a compulsory component within the corporate and academic sectors. The speech coach Max Atkinson explains the development of slide shows in the following terms:

> One of the great attractions of the slide-driven approach was that it offered an easy way of appearing to be prepared and professional. The mere fact that you had some slides to show was enough in itself to qualify as a 'proper' presentation in the eyes of the audience, who were increasingly conditioned to expect nothing else. (Atkinson 2004: 124)

Atkinson regrets the era of "chalk and talk" (i.e. writing words up on a board only if and when necessary) and notes that slide shows "serve little useful purpose other than to remind speakers what to say next" (Atkinson 2004: 118).

On the face of it, the slide show makes the speaker's job easier and also less confronting. The speaker can use the slides to jot his/her memory.

And the screen upon which the slides are projected work like a buffer for the shy speaker, who feels less conspicuous: all eyes are on the screen rather than on him/her. However, the slide show gives rise to new challenges. It quite often makes the audience's task more difficult. Slide shows and their incumbent technology (computers, video projectors) can potentially jeopardise listenability as well as counteract the staging of an interaction, and therefore hinder the speaker's task of making a connection with the audience.

The risks of the slide show are highlighted by the expression "Death by PowerPoint".[1] Here are the most common pitfalls:

- Too many slides that change too quickly;
- Too much text on the slides and not enough visual material (despite the adage "a picture is worth a thousand words");
- Slides that reproduce word for word the speech, in full or in part, which speakers read off the slides, often with their backs to the audience;
- Text or material that is too small and therefore not easy to see, and which does not optimise all the space on the slide;
- Too many different styles and sizes of fonts, too many colours, too many titles, making for a slide that is "too busy".

Jeopardising Listenability

The slide show brings into play a new multimodal competence: that of *successfully combining the verbal and the visual channels* so that the visual channel *enhances* the verbal, and that, together, they *generate one coherent meaning*. However, most often, adding the visual to the verbal complicates the communication process because it jeopardises listenability and places a higher cognitive load on the audience. The audience is faced with the challenge of trying to simultaneously process information from channels which do not always communicate the same meaning. In some cases, the visual channel takes over, and the slide show *is* the presentation, never mind what is actually said and done by the speaker on stage. In other cases, the visual channel presents a parallel version of the speech, and the audience is faced with the dilemma of not knowing where to focus their attention.

Dissociating the two channels has become acceptable in a limited number of speech genres that target restricted communities. For example, in the international scientific community, it can be acceptable for the slides to be in a language (e.g. English) that is not the language of the verbal presentation (e.g. the native language of the scholar). Similarly, during scientific conference papers, which typically bear high information content, it is acceptable to present complex tables and figures on the slides that will not be commented upon directly during the speech.

When the Slide Show Counteracts the Staging of an Interaction with the Audience

The second main problem is that the slide show often counteracts the staging of an interaction and makes it more of a challenge for the speaker to establish a connection with the audience. Rather than speakers speaking *directly to* an audience, they speak *through a screen* (not only the screen onto which the slides are projected, but also quite often the screen of the speaker's laptop, which becomes the control panel for the presentation—although it is better to use a small hand remote control to pass from one slide to the next as discretely as possible). Speakers sometimes use the expression "I'm going to talk to some slides", which indeed suggests that the screen becomes a third party in the interaction. Physically, speakers often turn their backs on the audience and look at the slides, or keep their eyes glued to their laptop, failing to maintain a visual connection with their audience.

Another difficulty is that, unlike the traditional method of writing with chalk on a blackboard, the slide show is prepared in advance. This makes it more difficult for the speaker to feign spontaneity, and appear in the here and now of a speech devised especially for the audience at hand. In the corporate sector, it is common practice for companies to provide representatives with standard slide shows that cannot be altered or personalised by the speaker. Some multinationals provide slide shows to their outposts in different countries, which are often translated word for word without taking into account the cultural differences of the target audience. Finally, let us mention a subverted use of the slide show that is becoming more widespread in the context of certain speech genres (e.g. academic,

professional), and that consists in using the slide show as a record of the presentation, to send out to audience members after the moment of delivery.

2   Functions of the Slide Show

A slide show can enhance your presentation on the condition that you give thought to how the verbal and the visual channels will cohabit, and also decide on the precise function(s) it will fulfil. For each speech you are required to give, ask yourself the following questions: Is the slide show imposed by the genre? If not, is it worth doing? What purpose(s) will it serve? A number of functions can be distinguished. Slide shows can

- provide a visual representation of content that is difficult to explain verbally;
- underscore your authority and experience on a topic (e.g. a scientist who presents results of experiments);
- make the organisation of the speech clear (e.g. the title of the section of the speech can appear at the top of each slide);
- attract attention at an important moment of the speech;
- entertain the audience: make them laugh, create complicity (e.g. a funny photograph);
- ease the cognitive load at specific points of the speech by creating "visual interludes" (e.g. photographs that offer a change of scene, are relaxing, etc.).

It is worth systematically identifying one or several of these functions for *every* slide you include in your presentation. Depending on what function(s) are most frequent, this will determine the *overall role of the slide show for a specific speech*.

3   Types of Content

Each of the aforementioned functions lends itself to particular types of content, which are summed up in Table 11.1. These can be divided into two categories: (1) textual content; (2) visual content. In genres belong-

Table 11.1 Types of content presented on slides

Textual	Visual content
Headings	Photographs
Points (1, 2, 3…)	Drawings/paintings
Quotes	Tables, figures
Website addresses and other types of references, sources, and so on	Logos, icons

ing to the New Oratory such as TED talks and keynotes, speeches in recent years display less textual content and more visual content. In other words, the visual channel is being exploited for what it really has to offer—truly abiding by the adage "a picture paints a thousand words". This is perfectly illustrated by the famous opening sequence of the keynote when Steve Jobs unveiled the first iPhone in 2007. The textual content on the slides is limited to the catchphrase "Apple reinvents the phone", which gives way to an edited photograph of an iPod featuring a phone dial from 30 years ago. And then this photograph gives way to one of the new iPhones. The visual channel has two functions here: to stage the unveiling of the product by attracting attention and creating suspense, and to create humour and complicity with the audience. At this precise moment, the slides really do "take centre stage".

4 Let the Slide Show Take Centre Stage … at Specific Moments

Just like the moment when Steve Jobs unveiled the first iPhone, the slide show can take centre stage in key parts of a speech, and become the central resource for making meaning. In this case, it predominates over the verbal channel, which takes a backseat with respect to the visual. An important question to ask yourself is when exactly to run the slide show. It does not necessarily need to run the entire length of the speech. Quite often, a slide show will only be used for part of the duration of the speech. In many examples of TED talks, a genre that illustrates the variety of innovative possibilities provided by the slide show, the slides begin once the talk has already got underway—that is, after the *captatio*,

and once the initial connection has been established with the audience. The slide show often coincides with the truly informative part of the talk (e.g. "Now, here are the facts"). And then the slide show is often turned off just before the peroration, in order to "re-centre" on the audience.[2]

Alternatively, the slide show can be used to launch the speech and reinforce the attention-getter, as in the following opening from a TED talk. A photograph is projected after the first three sentences and provides the answer to the question that has just been expressed verbally. After a dramatic pause, the answer is confirmed via the verbal channel:

> *I'm a neuroscientist, and I do experiments to test how different chemicals in the brain influence the choices we make.* I'm here to tell you the secret to successful decision-making. [A photo of a sandwich appears on a slide] *A cheese sandwich.* (M. Crockett, "Beware neuro-bunk", TED talk)[3]

Similar to a picture book, the verbal and the visual are brought together and *interact* to produce meaning. The visual is *integrated into* the verbal and works to *reinforce the interaction* with the audience (e.g. suspense, humour). This opens up possibilities that extend far beyond the basic reproduction of the (verbal) wordings of the speech on the slides.

Moreover, we can see how the potential tension between the verbal and visual channels can be managed by alternating the focus on each. This provides the audience with moments to rest their eyes and ears respectively, and also brings variety to the performance, in addition to other means of variation (e.g. vocal variation; cf. previous chapter).

5   *"And Now for the Slide Show"*: Refer Explicitly to the Slide Show

We have just looked at examples where the visual is integrated into the verbal. This can also be achieved by creating verbal cues and explicitly referring (verbally) to the slide show. Referring at regular intervals to the presence of the slide show, as well as to the specific content of the

slides, allows you to as it were "walk" the audience through them. Steve Jobs does this during the iPhone launch, when he says, "here it [the iPhone] is… no, actually, here it is, but we're going to leave it there for now". This verbal explicitation capitalises on the visual channel in order to produce humour and suspense and enhance the interaction with the audience. Moreover, such remarks will have more impact if they appear spontaneous and part of the on-the-spot adjustments to the speech, beginning with discourse markers (e.g. "well", "you know").

For instance, you can announce when you switch the focus to the visual channel. In one of former U.S. vice president Al Gore's TED talks, his slide show begins after a lengthy verbal introduction, at the end of which he finally announces the topic of his talk via a direct question: "What can you do about the climate crisis?" Shortly after, he explicitly transitions towards the visual channel: "now the slide show". He then follows up with a series of remarks about the slide show itself, which takes on added value when we learn that it has been reworked and tailored to this specific speaking occasion:

> I want to focus on what many of you have said you would like me to elaborate on: *what can you do about the climate crisis?* I want to start with, I'm going to show some *new images*, and [projection of slide with a graph entitled "Record US Heat"] *now, the slide show. I update the slide show every time I give it. I add new images because I learn more about it every time I give it*. It's like beachcombing, you know? Every time the tide comes in and you find some more shells. *Just in the last two days, we got the new temperature records in January*. (A. Gore, "Averting the climate crisis", TED talk)[4]

In Bono's TED talk, which has been quoted previously (cf. Chap. 7), he makes the transition to the visual via an imperative form ("look") and deictic reference ("these data sets"):

> *Look* at what's been achieved. *Look* at the pictures *these data sets* print. [projection of slide with a graph entitled "Number of people receiving antiviral therapy"] Since the year 2000, since the turn of the millennium, there are

eight million more AIDS patients getting life-saving antiretroviral drugs. (Bono, "The good news on poverty […]", TED talk)[5]

Bono refers at regular intervals to the visual material being displayed on his slides, be they figures or photographs, including the photographs of two specific individuals to whom he refers by name, literally putting a face on facts and figures:

> Seven thousand kids a day. **Here**'s two of them. **This is** Michael and Benedicta [photograph of Michael and Benedicta] and uh they're alive thanks in large part [photograph of Dr Patricia Asamoah] to Dr Patricia Asamoah, she's amazing, and the Global Fund, which all of you financially support, whether you know it or not.

Indeed, the visual channel proves useful to make facts and statistics more "digestible" for the audience. Each of Bono's slides has a heading that is dramatic, enigmatic and/or humorous—for example, figures take the headings "inertia" and "momentum"—and under one of the figures appears the colloquial remark, "We screw it up":

> So why aren't we jumping up and down about this? Well, the opportunity is real, but so is the jeopardy. We can't get this done until we really accept that we can get this done. Look at this graph. [graph entitled "Inertia (We screw it up)"] It's called inertia. It's how we screw it up. [List appears on left of slide: "Corruption, Equality, Apathy"] And the next one is really beautiful. It's called momentum. [graph entitled "Momentum (We don't screw it up)"] And it's how we can bend the arc of history down towards zero, just doing the things that we know work. [List appears on right of slide: "Technology, Transparency, Investment"] So inertia versus momentum.

More generally, when you present a slide with a graph, table or figure— that is, a slide containing information that needs interpreting—give the audience a moment to interpret it themselves and take in the information. And announce your intention to give them time to do so, for example "I'll just pause to give you a moment to grasp these facts"; "take a look at these numbers", and so on. Or, you may simply pause (a vocal cue as opposed to a verbal cue).

6   Language Choices for the Text on the Slides

As underlined in the previous discussion, it is best to avoid reproducing the text of your speech on the slides. When text does appear on slides, it is important to make it as concise as possible. Long sentences are to be avoided. In fact, be they long or short, sentences are to be avoided. Instead, use ellipsis and reduce sentences to nominal phrases. If you really have to project a sentence, keep it short.

The preferred linguistic forms for the textual content of slides are illustrated below. Each piece of textual content is reproduced next to what is actually said by the speaker. It is striking *how closely the verbal and the visual texts coincide*:

Verbal channel	Visual channel (text on the slide): Short clauses:
Consider this. Make a decision to *live a carbon-neutral life*. Those of you who are good at branding, I'd love to get your advice and help on how to say this in a way that connects with the most people. *It is easier than you think*. It really is. A lot of us in here have made that decision and it is really pretty easy. It means: *reduce* your carbon dioxide emissions with the full range of choices that you make, and *then* purchase or acquire *offsets* for the remainder that you have not completely reduced.	4. Live a "carbon-neutral" life. It's easier than you think. Reduce; then offset the rest.
(TED talk, A. Gore)	
	Clause with the subject ellipted:
The coolest thing about iPod is that the whole, your whole music library *fits in your pocket*, ok, you can take your whole music library with you, right in your pocket.	Fits in your pocket
(Keynote, iPod launch 2001)	
	Nominal phrases:
A few years ago, my colleagues were interested in how a brain chemical called *serotonin* would influence people's *decisions* in social situations.	Seratonin and decision-making
(TED talk, M. Crockett)	

	Nominal phrases:
So Dr. Love bases his argument on studies showing that when you boost people's *oxytocin*, this increases their *trust, empathy* and *cooperation*.	Oxytocin [text on left] Trust Empathy Cooperation [text on right]
(TED talk, M. Crockett)	

	Nominal phrase:
So, let's look at *portable music*, let's look at the landscape.	Portable music
(Keynote, iPod launch 2001)	

	Nominal phrase:
And, even though others are starting to ship, I think this is going to be the *first dual core tablet to ship in volume*.	First dual-core tablet to ship in volume
(Keynote, iPad 2 launch, 2011)	

	Adjectival phrase:
The first one [major breakthrough] is it's *ultra-portable*.	Ultra-portable
(Keynote, iPod launch 2001)	

These examples beg the following question: How can you obtain such a high degree of coincidence between the two channels? The slide presentation has made spontaneous production basically impossible. Compared to the pre–PowerPoint era, it has now become necessary to prepare your speech in a far more thorough way. Your script preparation and your slide presentation need to be done together, according to the following stages:

1. Write a first version of your script;
2. Decide which textual content is to be reproduced on a slide;
3. Prepare the text of your slides by repeating word for word parts of what you will say and, if necessary, change the written script so that they coincide.

Verbal and visual channels can be made to coincide by using the animation modes provided by most software, which allow you to draw up one

point one after the other on the same slide. For instance, different items on a list can be projected as you say them. This avoids a list being projected outright, which can result in cognitive overload and the loss of the audience's attention. At the same time, animation mode can function as a prompter—as long as you know your script well and have practiced coordinated the verbal and visual channels beforehand.

Summary: Questions to ask while preparing the slide show:

– Have I clearly defined the place of the slide show (purpose and timing) in my speech?
– Have I integrated the slide show by including explicit references to it in my script?
– Do my slides exploit the visual channel by displaying more visual content than textual content?
– Have I reduced the text on the slides as much as possible?
– Have I removed all parasite punctuation marks on the slides (points, dashes, arrows)?
– Does the textual content on the slides really coincide with what I will say?

Concerning the rehearsal of the speech:

– Have I rehearsed enough with the slide show?
– Have I taken into enough consideration how I will manage on stage? Will the position where I stand allow me to look both at the screen and at the audience?
– Do I pause sufficiently after changing slides?
– Does the audience have enough time to take in the content of each slide?
– Do I accompany the gaze of the audience enough—for example, by looking at the screen myself, by moving to the screen and pointing to content on it?

Expressions to Introduce the Slide Show:

And now let's turn to the slide show
And now for the slide show
So let's take a look at a few figures
I'd like to show you what this looks like
And here's what it/all this looks like
Here are a few pictures to explain what I am talking about
Let me/allow me to show you a few visuals
I will illustrate what I am talking about with a few visuals
I've done enough talking, let me now show you some material

Expressions to Refer to the Content of the Slides:

Take a look at this graph (for one moment)
I'll give you a moment to take a look at/to look at
Here's a visual representation of what I'm talking about
What I'm saying is illustrated in the following photo

On the right/on the left/at the top/at the bottom you can see
In the top left-hand corner/ in the top right-hand corner/in the bottom left-hand corner/in the bottom right-hand corner you can notice…

As you can see/observe/notice/gather/deduce/understand from this chart… (there has been a steady rise/fall in growth…)

This pie chart/graph/diagram etcetera indicates/shows/illustrates/underlines the trend/development/growth/progression in investment/turnover/volume etcetera

The vertical/horizontal axis indicates…

Notes

1. A Google search of the expression "Death by PowerPoint" bore 93 300 000 on 18/1/2019. PowerPoint is the registered trademark for the Microsoft software program launched in 1987.

2. Similarly, communication advisers recommend turning off the video projector for the question-answer time that follows certain speeches, in order to focus on the interpersonal relation between speaker and audience.
3. Transcribed from video retrieved from https://www.ted.com/talks/molly_crockett_beware_neuro_bunk.
4. Transcribed from video retrieved from https://www.ted.com/talks/al_gore_on_averting_climate_crisis.
5. Transcribed from video retrieved from https://www.ted.com/talks/bono_the_good_news_on_poverty_yes_there_s_good_news.

Reference

Atkinson, M. (2004). *Lend Me Your Ears*. London: Random House.

Part III

Structuring Your Speech for Listenability

12

The Syntax of the Sentence

This part of the book focuses on how to structure your speech—from the syntactic organisation of the clause and the sentence, to that of the entire speech. This is particularly important for public address. In the context of oral monologue, addressees cannot backtrack if they have missed something. Explicit signposting is necessary to guide the audience through your speech. Streamlined syntax at sentence level, together with clear and explicit structuring at the macro level, are the best safeguards to guarantee listenability and, therefore, the success of your speech. We start at the level of the sentence in this chapter, and move towards an increasingly macro level in subsequent chapters.

1 Structuring Public Address

Table 12.1 presents the script of an introduction to a speech written by a non-native student (version 1) that has been rewritten to improve listenability (version 2). The speech is about stereotypes concerning France.

Changes made in version 2 include the addition of markers that stage an interaction: first- and second-person pronouns, interrogatives, the

Table 12.1 Example of restructuring of a speech

Version 1	Version 2
We are all aware of American stereotypes (hamburgers, Hollywood…) but let me today talk to you about France, the French, Paris.	Hamburgers. Hollywood. Of course, we all know off by heart the stereotypes associated with the Americans, and which do indeed ring true.
	But let me talk to you today about another nationality. A nationality seeped in clichés. Us. The French. For we come with a whole bunch of stereotypes.
Well I'm sure that you all know about stereotypes that concern Paris: romantic city, city lights at night, city of love, Champs de Mars, the lovers' lawn, Eiffel Tower, I can go on and on but the stereotype about Paris are true.	First, let's start with our city. Paris. Think for a moment. What comes to mind?
	Paris, the most romantic city.
	Paris, the city of light.
	Paris, the city of love.
	Paris, with the Champs de Mars, the lawn for lovers. Paris, with her Eiffel Tower.
People come to Paris to visit, to take a walk, to shop.	I can go on and on. And these stereotypes are true.
	Why do visitors come to Paris?
	They come to stroll.
Couples from all around the world, even celebrity couples come to Paris because it's romantic, believe me, what's more romantic than having dinner at the Eiffel Tower?	They come to shop.
	They come for romance.
Even American producers come and direct their films in Paris.	
	Yes, couples from all around the world come for that wonderfully romantic dinner at the Eiffel Tower. Who can beat that?
	And think of the films that feature Paris—all those American directors who feel the need to introduce the French "*couleur locale*" into their staging?

imperative form "let's", the adverbs "of course" and "yes", the conjunction "but". But the process of rewriting is most striking in the way the sentences have been reorganised. The sentences of the first version would be acceptable for a text designed to be read by the addressee, but not as a script for a speech. They do not respect the cognitive limits specific to oral communication. The rate of lexical density is too high, and the ideas are not introduced progressively.

This is why the sentences in version 2 are shorter and more numerous. In fact, their number has been multiplied by more than 5 (version n° 1 contains 5 sentences, version 2 26 sentences). Most sentences in version 2 only contain one clause per sentence; subordinate clauses have often been made into a separate sentence. In addition, some of the sentences in version 2 only contain a noun phrase ("Hamburgers", "Hollywood", "The French").

Progression between sentences is also clearer in version 2. It is not too difficult to follow the thread of the discourse and to ascertain the link between two adjacent sentences. This is achieved because the sentences are arranged logically, either by respecting chronological order, by placing cause in front of consequence, or by placing a claim or affirmation in front of a justification. Sentences also flow naturally from one to the next when they are about the same referent (topic continuity), for example "They come to stroll. They come to shop." Topic continuity is also produced by figures of repetition, which not only condition the internal organisation of the sentence but also bring into clearer focus the macro-organisation of the speech.

Overall, listenability has been improved thanks to a lower rate of lexical density and a more *streamlined* syntax. Streamlined syntax makes it easier for the listener to identify what the sentence is about, how it is linked to the context and where the speech is going. To sum up, streamlined sentences[1]

– are short;
– contain a low rate of subordinated clauses;
– are built on the unit <Subject + Verb + Complement> without it being interrupted;

– begin with content (referents) that carries over from the preceding sentence (topic continuity);
– stretch the content out over several sentences (repetition and "stretching").

These strategies are investigated in this chapter and the following chapter.

2   Short Sentences, with Few Subordinated Clauses

Oral communication specialists have set the maximum number of words per sentence at 16 words per sentence. Short sentences are definitely preferred in new public speaking formats such as keynotes and TED talks, where sentences of 16 words or more are extremely rare.[2] On the other hand, political speeches (including recent ones) always contain occasional examples of long sentences of 16 words or more. The Gettysburg address (cf. Chap. 8), concludes with a particularly long sentence which creates contrast with the very short sentences earlier in the speech. Every speech should contain several very short sentences (i.e. less than five words) to create contrast in rhythm, make for a more lively performance and increase listenability.

Short sentences also mean fewer subordinated clauses. Instead of including two clauses in the same sentence by subordinating one to the other, it is more effective to place them in separate sentences. If necessary, these can be linked to one another by an emphatic structure typical of conversation, such as "That is why…". Again, in contrast to political speeches, genres belonging to the New Oratory contain a particularly low rate of subordinate clauses.

Table 12.2 presents sentences taken from scripts prepared by students for their personal pitches at job interviews. If you try to read these sentences out loud, you will see that they are difficult to perform, let alone memorise. The sentences are too long and contain too many clauses. They have been rewritten in the column on the right.

Table 12.2 Examples of restructuring of sentences

As indicated in my CV, I worked for three years as a receptionist in a company I left to move to a job with more responsibilities as a personal assistant to the Managing director of a small company of twenty people for six years.	As indicated in my CV, I first worked for three years as a receptionist. I then moved to a job with far more responsibilities, as personal assistant to the Managing director of a company of twenty employees. I've been working there now for six years.
One sentence: relative subordinate clause (a company *I left*…) + prepositional phrases (ex. a job *with*…*as*….)	Three sentences + explicit chronology (cf. then; now)
I have gained lots of experience in my current company, but now I would like to improve my professional profile with other experiences this time in a large company, where I can use my language skills, as you can see from my CV, I am Spanish, I lived in France and for almost nine years I've been living here.	I have gained lots of experience in my current company. But now I'd like to improve my professional profile and move to a larger company. I'd particularly like to use my language skills. As you can see from my CV, I am Spanish. But I've been living here in France for almost nine years now.
Coordination (but) + subordination (where…; as…) + juxtaposition (I am Spanish, I lived in France) + coordination (and)	Five sentences; *But* in sentence-initial position
I'm very keen to work for your company as you have clients all over the world because due to my Spanish origins, I speak fluent Spanish. My contract with my current employer ends in three months and I would like to join your prestigious company because I consider myself to be well organised and that helps me to work better under pressure.	I'm very keen to work for your company. I am Spanish. My Spanish language skills would be very useful for your international clients. My current contract ends in three months. I'd really like to use my skills in your prestigious company. I consider myself to be well organised. This allows me to work better under pressure.
Two sentences; logical links not clear	Seven sentences + logical order: statement ("I am Spanish") + advantages for employer (My Spanish… would be very useful for…); general ("I'd really like to use my skills…") + specific ("well organised")

(continued)

Table 12.2 (continued)

I consider I'm skilled at maintaining good relations with clients, furthermore operating with people outside the United Kingdom has allowed me to develop my persuasive skills.	I consider I'm skilled at maintaining good relations with clients. And my persuasive skills have been enhanced by the fact that I've been operating with people outside the United Kingdom.
One sentence + incorrect use of *furthermore*, connector used in formal written English and mainly in sentence-initial position	Two sentences; the two skills are announced one after the other before explaining how they were acquired
I am a hard worker and I perform well under pressure, this is why I would be the perfect asset to you.	I am a hard worker and I perform well under pressure. That's why I would be the perfect asset to you.
Incorrect use of "this/that is why", emphatic structure used in sentence-initial position	"That's why" in sentence-initial position
I'm applying for this job as a secretary in your company because I am looking for a job with international scope.	I'm now seeking a job with international scope. That's why I'm applying for this job as a secretary in your company.
Subordinate with *because* at the end of a sentence to be avoided	Order <cause + consequence>, with emphatic structure "That's why"
With my experience, I fit all the requirements for the job, which demands administrative and communication skills like computer knowledge.	With my experience, I fit all the requirements for the job. This job demands skills in administration and skills in communication, including a sound knowledge in computing.
Avoid relative (which…)	Two sentences, with a better distinction between "administration" and "communication"
Over the past three years I have gained experience in customer service, helping clients and answering their needs, managing emails and phone calls and maintaining clients' databases.	Over the past three years I have gained much experience in customer service. I help clients and respond to their needs. I manage emails and phone calls. And I also maintain the databases of clients.
Avoid at the end of a sentence in oral English the present participle, used four times here (helping…; answering…; managing…; maintaining…)	Four sentences + repetition of *I* as grammatical subject and agent

3   The Unit <Subject + Verb + Complement>

The subject and the verb are essential sentence constituents, to which we need to add the verbal complement for cases where the verb is transitive. From a cognitive point of view, the addressee cannot begin to interpret the sentence and seize its pertinence until he/she has heard or read these elements. Delaying these elements places a cognitive burden on the addressee. Both in speech and in writing, the addressee's job is made easier when the speaker gets to the point quickly, by beginning with the subject and getting to the verb as quickly as possible without interrupting the unit <Subject + Verb + Complement>. This is even more important in the case of public address, where the risk of cognitive burden is increased by the oral monologue set-up.

In public address in English, the majority of clauses and sentences begin directly with the subject. This is a trait of the new streamlined style ushered in by the Gettysburg Address. In Martin Luther King's "I have a dream" speech, 66% of main clauses begin directly with the grammatical subject.[3] The remaining clauses begin with either a coordinating conjunction ("and" or "but") or an adverbial complement that presents circumstantial information (where? when? how? etc.), for example:

> *One hundred years later*, the life of the Negro is still sadly crippled by the manacles of segregation and the chains of discrimination. (Martin Luther King)

Adverbial complements are indeed best placed at the beginning of a sentence, as in Steve Jobs' catchphrase "Today, Apple is going to reinvent the phone", which can be broken down as follows:

Today,	*Apple*	*is going to reinvent*	*the phone.*
Adverbial	Subject	Verb	Complement

It is best to avoid an intermediate position where the adverbial would interrupt the unit <Subject + Verb (+ Complement)>, for example:

> Apple is today going to reinvent the phone.

It is also better to avoid end position, reserved for the informative part of the sentence which contains the tonic syllable in English:

Apple is going to reinvent the phone today.

The exception to this is when the adverbial complement is particularly long, in which case it is too heavy at the beginning of the clause and delays the subject for too long. Another reason why adverbial complements are best placed in sentence-initial position is that the circumstantial information works at another cognitive level to "frame" the sentence. This will be discussed in the following chapter.

Notes

1. In theory, it is incorrect to talk here about "sentences", which is a unit of written language. However, the term will be used here, both for the sake of convenience, but also because, in the case of elaborate orality and a written script (cf. Chap. 5), we really are dealing with a form of written text.
2. For instance, Max Atkinson (2004) affirms that over 16 words a sentence becomes "dangerous".
3. This count did not include embedded, subordinate clauses.

Reference

Atkinson, M. (2004). *Lend Me Your Ears*. London: Random House.

13

Managing Information

In this chapter, we continue the study of the organisation of the speech by focusing on the way information is managed, so that it flows from one sentence to the next.

1   Given and New Information

The internal organisation of sentences strikes a balance between given and new information. Typically, a sentence contains some "given" information that is already known to the listener, and some new information, which makes up the newsworthy part of the sentence. Balancing given and new information is important whatever the channel (oral or written) and whatever the genre, but is even more critical in public address, where the cognitive ceiling is low, and the audience has to seize in real time the pertinence of each sentence.

In English, like in many languages, given information is best placed at the beginning of the sentence and the new information in the latter part of the sentence. New information is highlighted by the tonic syllable, which is generally placed at the end of the sentence. End-position assigns

newsworthiness, and the closer we get to the end of the sentence, the more the content becomes newsworthy:

Initial position ———————————————→ Final position
Given ———————————————————→ New information
    information   (tonic syllable)
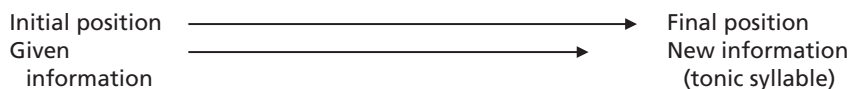
The given information is generally a referent that has been mentioned in the previous discourse, for example in the sentence just before. Beginning the sentence in this way creates a bridge between the sentence and the previous discourse, and the audience has no time to lose its bearings. The audience is eased into the new information, which is framed by the given information.

This pattern is exemplified in the line already quoted from Steve Jobs' speech. In "Today, Apple is going to reinvent the phone", the newsy part of the sentence is "reinvent the phone", and the verb "reinvent" carries the tonic syllable. It is preceded by given information: the subject "Apple" has been explicitly referred to earlier in the sequence. In addition, the sentence begins with the adverbial "today", whose position was discussed at the end of the previous chapter. As already noted, adverbial complements are best placed in sentence-initial position, in front of the subject, so as not to interrupt the unit <Subject + Verb>. This is also the most natural position for adverbials because they generally provide a spatial or chronological frame for the sentence. And in public address, they are particularly effective in sentence-initial position when they contain a deictic, as in "today".

2   <Adverbial [Deictic] + Subject [Deictic]>

The deictic "today" marks temporal coincidence and anchors the sentence in the here and now of the delivery. In sentence-initial position, deictics create an immediate means of entry into the sentence via what is directly "given" to the audience. The adverbial "today" can be introduced to create an attention-getter at a key moment of your speech, for example at the very beginning:

Today, all of us do, by our presence here, and by our celebrations in other parts of our country and the world, confer glory and hope to newborn liberty. (N. Mandela, inaugural, 1994)

or to announce the last part of the speech, for instance in conjunction with "so":

So *today, I* wish you nothing better than similar friendships. (J. K. Rowling, Harvard commencement address, 2008)

In these examples, the effect is enhanced because the subject also contains a deictic first-person reference (e.g. "us", "I").

"Today" is used in combination with "we" in product launches to emphasise the idea of the latest innovation:

Today, we're pleased to announce iTunes 2. (S. Jobs, iPod launch, 2001)

Today, we're going to introduce iPhone 5. (P. Schiller, iPhone 5 launch, 2012)

"Today" precedes the very first mention of the new product and heightens its newsworthiness. There is a contrast between absolutely given ("today") and absolutely new (i.e. the product).

"Today" is a common deictic in initial position, but adverbials containing other deictics perform a similar task:

A few years ago, my colleagues and I were interested in how a brain chemical called serotonin would influence people's decisions in social situations. (TED talk, M. Crockett)

Just like the first sentence of the Gettysburg ("*Fourscore and seven years ago our fathers* brought forth on this continent a new nation, conceived in liberty and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal"), this sentence begins with a time adverbial ("a few years ago") followed by a grammatical subject that refers to several discourse participants ("my colleagues and I"). Taken together, they frame the newsworthy information placed in the second half of the clause which, in this particu-

lar instance, introduces several new concepts at the same time and proves quite complex.

3   Topic Continuity

To start a new sentence, an easy option is to place a personal pronoun ("I", "we", "you") in subject position. The sentence will therefore begin with an easily recognisable, inherently given referent in the context of delivery, and the beginning of the sentence will place no cognitive burden on the audience. Otherwise, it is best to begin the sentence by picking up on a referent from the preceding discourse, preferably in the sentence just before. This guarantees topic continuity, and keeps the cognitive load to a minimum.

Topic continuity is illustrated in the following sentence, taken from a student's script for a debating tournament about beauty. It contains two coordinated clauses, and the subject of the first clause, "beauty", is taken up by the pronoun "it" in the second clause:

> *Beauty* is defined as the quality of being physically attractive, and *it* is also the qualities in a person or a thing that give pleasure to the sense of the mind.

However, the progression between this sentence (repeated below) and the next is not as smooth:

> Beauty is defined as the quality of being physically attractive, and it is also the qualities in a person or a thing that give pleasure to the sense of the mind. Moreover, makeup has existed for a very long time, but at the beginning, it was used by both men and women, and it was first used for funeral rites.

The subject of the second sentence, "makeup", is referred to here for the first time. Even if it is not difficult to deduce the link between makeup and beauty—and we suppose that the link will be made explicit in the sentences to come—the transition between these two sentences is abrupt, we lose our bearings for a moment and need to read as it were between

the lines and anticipate the link, which increases our cognitive load. This load would be eased by an intermediate sentence with the referent "makeup" placed not at the beginning, but in the second part, and explicitly linked to "beauty", for example "To enhance physical beauty, people have always used makeup". The student's original sequence is not helped either by an inappropriate use of the connective "moreover", which is used in English to announce a more important or newsworthy point (not the case here).

This type of problem does not occur in the speech opening reproduced below, where sentences flow easily from one to the next. The speech was delivered by the American ambassador to the United Nations during a meeting on the Syria crisis in 2016. The context is extremely formal. The ambassador delivers her speech sitting at a desk and reads from a script. This explains why many of the sentences are long compared to the contemporary norms for public address, although these long sentences do alternate with some extremely short ones. There are few subordinated clauses, and it is generally easy to identify the unit <Subject + Verb + Complement>. Apart from three sentences beginning with a connective (either "yet" or "and"), and one beginning with an adverbial complement ("every day"), all the clauses and sentences begin directly with the subject. <u>We</u> have convened the Security Council today because the Russian Federation and the Assad Regime have launched an all-out air and ground offensive against Eastern Aleppa and its 275,000 civilians. <u>Russia and Assad</u> have reportedly launched more than 150 airstrikes over the last 72 hours, killing at least 139 people and injuring hundreds more, laying waste to what is left of an iconic Middle Eastern city. <u>These</u> are people who have suffered horribly in the five and a half years of war, yet <u>they</u> call the attacks from the air unprecedented in quantity and quality. <u>The Assad regime</u> is explicit. <u>It</u> believes only in a military solution. <u>It</u> says that it will conquer militarily every last square inch of Syria. And <u>it</u> does not care what's left of Syria in pursuing that military solution. Instead of pursuing peace, <u>Russia and Assad</u> make war. Instead of getting life-saving aid to civilians, <u>Russia and Assad</u> are bombing the humanitarian convoys, hospitals and first responders who are trying desperately to keep people alive. <u>Russia</u> will argue today no doubt that these attacks are meant to fight terrorism and that the people killed in this

offensive are terrorists or terrorist sympathizers. (Ambassador Power's remarks at a UN Security Council briefing on Syria, September 25, 2016)[1] In addition, the subject of every sentence presents given information. The personal pronoun "we" appears once, and in all the other sentences, the subject refers back to either one or both of the parties under discussion here, Russia and Bachar el-Assad's regime. A pronoun is used only twice ("the Assad regime" > "it"; "it"). The rest of the time, the lexical items are repeated (e.g. "Russia and Assad"; "Russia").

4   Introducing a Topic in Two Stages

When new information is introduced—preferably in the second part of the sentence—it needs to be done in stages, as in the sentence taken from the TED talk quoted in the previous section of this chapter:

> A few years ago, my colleagues and I were interested in how *a brain chemical called serotonin* would influence people's decisions in social situations. (TED talk, M. Crockett)

Here, instead of saying "the brain chemical serotonin", the nominal phrase is broken up via a naming process ("called"): "a brain chemical *called* serotonin". The new information is as it were "stretched out" in order to give the audience time to grasp the new topic being introduced, and thereby ease the cognitive load.

A similar effect is achieved in pairs of sentences or clauses in which the existence of a new topic is announced in a first stage, but is not identified until a second stage. This is how Robert Kennedy (speech quoted Chap. 5) announced the death of Martin Luther King. First, he says that he has some sad news, and then he gives the reason for this sadness:

> *I have some very sad news for all of you*, and, I think, sad news for all of our fellow citizens, and people who love peace all over the world; *and that is that* Martin Luther King was shot and was killed tonight in Memphis, Tennessee. (R. Kennedy, April 4, 1968)

Another example appears later in the same speech, where Robert Kennedy quotes a verse from the poet Azschylus. Before quoting the poem, he explains the personal link he has with the poet, which increases the pertinence of the quote and prompts the audience to listen in more closely:

> My favorite poem, my *my favorite poet was Aeschylus. And he once wrote*: Even in our sleep, pain which cannot forget falls drop by drop upon the heart, until, in our own deep despair, against our will, comes wisdom through the awful grace of God. (R. Kennedy, April 4, 1968)

Other examples use existential "there" followed by a term referring to the content to come (e.g. question, idea, point, issue) or the pronoun "this" used cataphorically (i.e. announcing a referent to the right):

> And then the Renaissance came and and we had *this big idea*, and the big idea was let's put the individual human being at the center of the universe above all gods and mysteries, and there's no more room for mystical creatures who take dictation from the divine. (E. Gilbert, "Your elusive creative genius", TED talk)[2]
>
> And what I've discovered since is this: bullies use violence in three ways. (S. Elworthy, "Fighting violence with non-violence", TED talk)[3]

Similarly, "something" can be used to announce an idea, which is enhanced in the following instance by the pause between the two clauses and the suspense that it creates:

> I was a very public failure, and I even thought about running away from the valley. But *something* slowly began to dawn on me: /I still loved what I did. (S. Jobs, commencement address, Stanford)[4]

Stretching out the new information goes hand in hand with a lower rate of lexical density. Here is an example of existential "there" followed by a naming process in the same speech delivered by Steve Jobs:

> When I was young, *there was an amazing publication called The Whole Earth Catalog*, which was one of the bibles of my generation. It was created by *a fellow named* Stewart Brand not far from here in Menlo Park, and he brought it to life with his poetic touch. (S. Jobs, commencement address, Stanford)

Naming processes are particularly frequent in product launches, but are also exploited in other contexts:

> And right now, we know that *the biggest disease of all is not a disease. It's corruption*. But *there's a vaccine for that too. It's called transparency*, open data sets, something the TED community is really on it. (Bono, "The good news on poverty […]" TED talk)

Another example of stretching out new information is provided by the question-answer pairs:

> And iPod lets you do exactly that, it's got a beautiful LCD display on it, it's back-lit for low light conditions if you want, and *it's got this really cool thing in the middle. What is that? Well that is called a scroll wheel.* (S. Jobs, keynote, iPod launch, 2001)[5]

5   Structures with High Lexical Density

While a general rule of thumb consists in respecting the cognitive ceiling of oral communication by not "loading up" a sentence with new information and by keeping the rate of lexical density low, exceptions can be made in order to allow the audience to visualise what is being said. Detail and colour can be added via specific structures which carry poetic and rhythmic value. These structures are pleasing to the audience, and evidence the speaker's mastery and innovative use of the language. Because they enhance rhythm, they also facilitate memorisation.

One structure is accumulation, a rhetorical figure in which similar word groups are multiplied, as in "men of all races, of all nationalities, and of all creeds" (M. L. King, Lincoln University, 1961). Accumulation will be discussed in the chapter on figures of speech (Chap. 15). Two other structures are described here:

– Phrases containing a modifier;
– The construction <noun phrase + noun phrase>.

"A Vivid Heart": Phrases Containing a Modifier

The modifier can be an adjective within the noun phrase (NP), or an adverb within the verb phrase. The modifier increases lexical density and makes the phrase heavier, but it also provides visual detail that makes the referent more striking and easier to remember—both for the speaker and for the audience. Professional speech writers call them "word pictures". Using a modifier in this way harks back to the use of adjectives in the formulae of oral literature—another mode of oral performance.

This is one area where the English language allows for much creativity, like the coining of the neologism "insanely" in the product launch of the first Macintosh computer (and in the product slogan):

> Many of us have been working on Macintosh for over two years now, and it has turned out *insanely great*. (S. Jobs, keynote, Macintosh launch, 1984)

Stringing together a list of modifiers (a case of accumulation) creates emphasis:

> We manipulated people's serotonin levels by giving them *this really disgusting-tasting, artificial, lemon-flavored* drink that works by taking away the raw ingredient for serotonin in the brain. (M. Crockett, "Beware neuro bunk", TED talk)

Many modifiers are used in the following TED talk, which reaches a climax via the repeated use of adverbs in end position:

> I wish you that *beautifully quiet* word, grace. The boldness in kindness, the gift of attention, and a *robust* sense of empathy. […] Our lives are made rich by reaching out to those around us, not by fencing ourselves in with that *niggly little* word, no. There are only two ways to live, as a victim, or as a fighter. I wish you the *blazing* latter. And most fervently, I think there's been a few people talking about this one this morning, requited love. A *vivid* heart, may it never be crushed, but if it is, may it love again, fuller, wiser, quieter. (N. Gemmell, "A letter to my goddaughter", TED talk)[6]

"The Bank of Justice": <NP of NP>

The same TED talk contains the construction <NP of NP>, such as "the gift of attention". Here, two noun phrases (NPs) are linked via the preposition "of". The first noun phrase introduces a metaphor. This structure is used frequently by Martin Luther King in his 1963 speech, contributing to the running metaphor of not honouring a debt (cf. Chap. 15). For example, instead of the sentence "we refuse to believe that no justice is possible", we find:

> But we refuse to believe that *the bank of justice* is bankrupt. (M. L. King, 1963)

The metaphor attached to the first noun phrase can be enhanced by an adjective, as in "a *robust* sense of empathy" in the Ted talk quoted above, or the following examples taken from Martin Luther King's 1963 speech: "a creative psalm of brotherhood"; "the *dark* and *desolate* valley of segregation"; "the *fierce* urgency of now". In his speech, <NP of NP> often functions in pairs:

> hew out of *the mountain of despair* (i) *a stone of hope* (ii)
>   battered by *the storms of persecution* (i) and staggered by *the winds of police brutality* (ii)

This structure is exploited in other genres:

> Well today I'm incredibly pleased to introduce iMac, our consumer product, and iMac comes from the marriage *of the excitement of the Internet* with *the simplicity of Macintosh*. (S. Jobs, keynote, iMac launch, 1998)[7]

To summarise, when revising the script of your speech, ask yourself the following questions for every sentence:

– Is the sentence too long? If it contains several clauses, can I place them in separate sentences?

– Do I begin with given information—either a first- or a second-person pronoun, or a referent that has already been mentioned in the previous discourse? Is there topic continuity between each sentence?
– If I use a pronoun, is the referent it refers to clear?
– Is new information placed in the latter part of the sentence? Can I rearrange the order of the words so that the most newsworthy part coincides with final position?
– If there is an adverbial complement, does it appear at the very beginning of the sentence, just before the subject?
– If the new information is particularly complex, can I add an adverbial with a deictic to anchor the sentence in the here and now of the delivery?
– Do I respect the cognitive ceiling of oral communication by avoiding too much new information in one sentence? Can I "stretch" the new information out to introduce it in two stages?
– Can I introduce colour and rhythm by adding a modifier or a series of modifiers?

Notes

1. Transcribed from video retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SJjvUkuQ_4I.
2. https://www.ted.com/talks/elizabeth_gilbert_on_genius/transcript.
3. https://www.ted.com/talks/scilla_elworthy_fighting_with_non_violence/transcript.
4. Transcribed from video retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hd_ptbiPoXM.
5. Transcribed from video retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=deopyTQOn7I.
6. Transcribed from video retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hg7eN_nHUGU.
7. Transcribed from video retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UJSTwzBYOm8.

14

Strategies for Concision

Among the techniques presented in the previous chapter to improve listenability, it was suggested that certain content be "stretched" out and introduced in two stages. This chapter presents structures that are based on the opposite strategy, that of concision, and which serve to emphasise certain content and create contrast during the performance.

1   Ellipsis

Let us begin with another extract from the 2007 iPhone launch, which exemplifies moreover the various strategies presented in the previous chapter: most sentences begin directly with the grammatical subject, with the exception of three instances of the coordinator "and" and one adverbial ("on the front"—sentence no. 10). Topic continuity is guaranteed by the pronoun "it", used to refer to the product, the main topic of the speech:

Third thing I want to talk about a little is design (1). We've designed something wonderful for your hand, just wonderful (2). And this is what it looks like (3). It's got a three-and-a-half inch screen on it (4). It's really big (5). And, it's the highest resolution screen we've ever shipped (6). It's 160

pixels per inch (7). *Highest we've ever shipped* (8). *It's gorgeous* (9). And on the front, there's only one button down there (10). We call it the home button (11). *Takes you home from wherever you are* (12). And that's it (13). Let's take a look at the side (14). *It's really thin* (15). It's thinner than any smart phone out there, at 11.6 millimeters (16). Thinner than the Q, thinner than the BlackJack, thinner than all of them (17). *It's really nice* (18). (S. Jobs, keynote, iPhone launch, 2007)

No sentence exceeds the ceiling of 16 words (the longest sentence (no. 16) contains 13 words), and the extract is punctuated at regular intervals by very short sentences that express to-the-point value judgements or descriptions that have come to be considered a trademark of Steve Jobs' style, for example: "It's really big", "It's 160 pixels per inch"; "It's gorgeous"; "And that's it"; "It's really thin".

 In addition, concision is achieved is some sentences thanks to the ellipsis of one or several clause constituents. Ellipsis is characteristic of conversation, where speakers tend to keep their contribution to a minimum for pragmatic reasons, so as to say what they have to say before the addressee can interrupt. However, in addition to the types of ellipsis that are common in conversation (such as the ellipsis of the lexical verb after the auxiliary (e.g. "Yes I will"), public speaking exhibits some more marked cases:

[The] third thing I want to talk about… (sentence no. 1) (ellipsis of the article)
   [It] takes you home from wherever you are (12) (ellipsis of the subject)
   [It's] Thinner than the Q, thinner than the BlackJack, thinner than all of them (17) (ellipsis of Subject + Verb)
   [It's the] highest we've ever shipped (8) (ellipsis of Subject + Verb + Definite Article)

Such examples are delivered with a specific prosody that generally includes marked pausing. For instance, in the following sentence, a pause (marked/) is inserted in the place of the ellipted verb in the last clause, creating a syncopated rhythm:

But these clinics have treated tens of thousands of patients to date, many of them children, and so exposing people to radiation, / potentially harmful. (M. Crocket, "Beware neuro-bunk", TED talk)

These ellipses are frequent in New Oratory formats, while examples closer to those of conversation can be found in political speeches:

> But a moment's reflection would convince me that whatever of high hope (as I think there is) there may be in this in the long run, its sudden execution is impossible. *What then? Free them all and keep them among us as underlings?* Is it quite certain that this betters their condition? I think I would not hold one in slavery, at any rate; yet the point is not clear enough for me to denounce people upon. *What next?* (A. Lincoln, October 16, 1854)[1]

Ellipsis increases expressiveness and hence contributes to the staging of the interaction. When it appears in the context of a personal judgement or an interrogative, it accentuates the subjective and/or interactive colour inherent in the content—for instance, that of the evaluation "really cool stuff" here:

> Like, just a couple of weeks ago, neuroscientists at MIT figured out how to break habits in rats just by controlling neural activity in a specific part of their brain. Really cool stuff. *[>It is really cool stuff]* (M. Crockett, "Beware neuro-bunk", TED talk)

In the same way, ellipsis heightens the subjectivity of exclamative "oh":

> So what are we going to do? <u>Oh, a stylus, right?</u> We're going to use a stylus. No, no, who wants a stylus? *[>Oh, we're going to add a stylus, right?]* (S. Jobs, keynote, iPhone launch, 2007)

And a similar effect to that of ellipsis is created by the one-word reaction by the speaker "exactly" (sales pitch quoted in Chap. 9):

> Everyone, how many of you guys are using your email to collaborate with people outside of your organisation? / And how many think that's really efficient? / *Exactly.* (Investor pitch)[2]

Here, "exactly" follows two questions that the speaker asks the audience and which is each followed by a pause, during which the audience pre-

sumably responds by a show of hands. With "exactly", the speaker expresses a reaction to the audience's response. He could have expressed this in a full sentence (e.g. "your answer doesn't surprise me/is exactly what I expected"), but the one-word response heightens the interactivity and spontaneity that the speaker is simulating.

2   Nominal Sentences

Nominal sentences contain a nominal phrase and lack a (conjugated) verb. The subject and the verb have been ellipted and only the complement remains. The segment produced is pronounced in a separate tone group and its independence is underlined by the marked pause before and after it (hence their being referred to here as "sentences"):

> I'm going to give you five words, and I just want you to hang on to them. Don't write them down. Just hang on to them. *Five words*. (P. Doolittle, "How your working memory makes sense of the world", TED talk)[3]
>
> Today I want to tell you three stories from my life. That's it. No big deal. *Just three stories*. (S. Jobs, commencement address, Stanford)

Instead of these nominal phrases standing on their own, the speaker could have introduced a finite verb form, for example: "*I'm only giving you* five words", "*I* just *have* three stories", and so on. Ellipsis of the verb creates a telegraphic style, conferring focus on the noun phrase, which is enhanced by the pausing.

These constructions are particularly marked in English. ESL grammar and translation manuals advise against using them. They rarely appear in English-written genres such as press articles or academic writing. Their use marks a recent development in public address and corresponds to an innovation in the English language. Nominal sentences cannot be found in political speeches before the end of the twentieth century. Interestingly, their advent coincides with that of the slide show, which favours the projection of lists of nominal phrases.

These utterances do not generally create a problem in comprehension. In fact, they have quite the opposite effect: cognitive load is reduced

because the speaker singles out for separate emphasis content that either has already been mentioned or is repeated (e.g. "Five words", "Just three stories", in the examples quoted above).

Barack Obama makes quite frequent use of nominal sentences. A common subtype involves a nominal phrase that contains a relative clause that is the focal point of the sentence:

> It's the answer spoken by young and old, rich and poor, Democrat and Republican, black, white, Hispanic, Asian, Native American, gay, straight, disabled and not disabled. *Americans who sent a message to the world that we have never been just a collection of individuals or a collection of red states.* (B. Obama, victory speech, November 4, 2008)

Keynotes feature a similar construction, where the nominal announces a characteristic of the product being launched, and is followed by a coordinated—*and* clause which provides a comment. These structures are neither typical of written English nor of conversation and therefore belong to the specific emerging syntax of public address:

> Old generation IO devices, *and* what that means is they're lower performance, and they're harder to use and most of them aren't so plug and play. (S. Jobs, keynote, iMac launch, 1998)

3   "One-liners": Short, Memorable Phrases

"I have a dream today", "Our moment is now", "Today, Apple is going to reinvent the phone": these are catchphrases and slogans that stand out in collective memory and were all originally quoted from speeches. One of the reasons why they have become catchphrases is that they are short and have been worded in such a way that makes them easy to remember. The media use the term "soundbite" (cf. bite, or piece of sound), which highlights their appeal to the ear. They are designed to be the one line that will make the headlines and will be quoted word for word in the media. They now also target the social media, and speech coaches talk about creating "Twitter-like headlines" (a sentence of no more than 140 characters is the limit for a Twitter headline).

One-liners feature in a number of political speeches which have gone down in history. Here are some famous ones:

Government of the people, by the people, for the people (A. Lincoln, November 19, 1863)

The only thing we have to fear is fear itself (F. D. Roosevelt, March 4, 1933)

We choose to go to the moon. (J. F. Kennedy, September 12, 1962)

Yes we can. (B. Obama, first appeared in speech delivered in New Hampshire, January 8, 2008)

Some of these correspond to the exact wording of a sentence of the speech, others to part of a longer sentence and/or to a slightly modified wording. The shorter the segment, the more it is likely to be repeated word for word—hence the need to keep it short if you do not want your words to be altered.

One-liners have also become essential in the marketing sector. Here is a list of some well-known one-liners spoken during product launches or other types of corporate presentations:

Cisco changes the way we live, work, play and learn (John Chambers, CEO Cisco)

Starbucks creates a third place between work and home (Howard Schultz, CEO Starbucks)

Google provides access to the world's information in one click (Sergey Brin and Larry Page, Google)

One thousand songs in your pocket (Steve Jobs, iPod)

iPhone 3G. Twice as fast at half the price (Steve Jobs, iPhone 3G, July 2008)

During sales pitches, investors now ask that future entrepreneurs condense into a maximum of ten words a description of the product or service which has the potential to become a slogan:

So what are you waiting for? We are Electronics and Co, and *we advise you to plug in, once and for all*. (Student sales pitch for a multi-plug electric socket)

One-liners catch the attention of the audience and lend themselves to subsequent quoting because of their *detachability*—that is, they prove easily detachable from the rest of the speech (Maingueneau 2017). This depends on the following features:

– They are short;
– They are placed in a key position in the speech, either to introduce or to wrap up a point, or at the very end of the speech;
– They are often repeated during the speech;
– They are autonomous in that they can be understood outside the context of the speech;
– They are specific in reference, and often contain an appeal to the addressee and/or other deictics ("I", "you", "now", "here", "today" etc.);
– They contain a verb representing an action (as opposed to a mental process or a verb of opinion) and express "over-assertion": the content is presented as indisputable and no longer open to debate (e.g. use of the simple present tense; no use of modal auxiliaries like "might", "could" etc.; no use of an interrogative form);
– They appeal to the ear through sound and rhythm, by playing on euphony (repetition of similar sounds) and figures of speech (e.g. repetition, antitheticals);
– During delivery, they are followed by a pause, which increases information focus.

A number of these features are illustrated in the one-liner "Today, Apple is going to reinvent the phone" (cf. the 2007 iPhone launch):

– It is short (eight words);
– It appears for the first time in the speech at the end of the introduction, and punctuates each transition;
– It is repeated seven times in the keynote, sometimes in a modified form (e.g. "So, we're gonna reinvent the phone"; "I think when you have a chance to get your hands on it, you'll agree, we have reinvented the phone");
– It contains the specific reference "Apple";

– It begins with the deictic "today", followed by the one uninterrupted unit <Subject + Verb + Complement>;
– It contains an action verb ("reinvent").

When the line appears for the first and second time in the speech, the verb "reinvent" combines with the present progressive tense be + going + to, which makes the action appear more immediate and, therefore, more pertinent to the audience. This choice of tense in English also highlights the role of the subject as agent. These meanings are no longer present in the one-liner that has since gone down in history, and that contains the shorter and more informative present tense: "Today, Apple reinvents the phone".

One-liners are important whatever the speech genre. They serve to sum up the main message and provide rhythm. They are pleasing both to the ear and from an aesthetic point of view, as they demonstrate play and creativity with the language.

4   A Specific One-liner: Antitheticals ("Ask not")

A specific one-liner is the antithetical. Antitheticals contain two parts: a negation, following by an affirmation, with each inherently linked to the other. The negation creates the expectation of an affirmation: once you hear it, you expect a second part. This internal cohesion makes them autonomous and detachable from the rest of the speech—and therefore ideal candidates to become one-liners.

Antitheticals have always been prominent in political speeches:

The world will *little note* nor *long remember* what we *say here*, but it can never forget what they *did here*. (A. Lincoln, Gettysburg)
We are *not* enemies, *but* friends (A. Lincoln, first inaugural)
Happiness lies *not* in the mere possession of money; it lies in the joy of achievement, in the thrill of creative effort (F. Roosevelt, inaugural)

President John F. Kennedy's particularly frequent use of antitheticals led one commentator to coin the term "the Kennedyesque antithetical".

Kennedy used them in all his speeches. His inaugural address contains seven examples, one of which launches the speech:

We observe today *not* a victory of party *but* a celebration of freedom.

And another has become the most famous line of the speech:

Ask *not* what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country.

Here are two other antitheticals from his inaugural:

I do *not* shrink from this responsibility, / I welcome it.
    United, / there is little we *cannot* do / in a host of cooperative ventures. / *Divided*, / there is little we *can* do, / for we dare not meet a powerful challenge at odds / and split asunder.

Like antitheticals, other structures have the potential to become one-liners that are built around a contrast. Contrasts are a key discursive pattern of public address, and are one of several patterns that trigger audience applause (Atkinson 2004). In classical rhetoric, contrast is a type of argument, or *topoi*. Pragmatically, contrasts allow the speaker to take a stand and construe an authoritative ethos. This is why they are found outside the political arena, whatever the speech type:

If I had never *dropped out*, / I would have never *dropped in* on that calligraphy class, and personal computers might not have the wonderful typography that they do. (S. Jobs, commencement address, Stanford)
    I believe this passionately, that we don't grow into creativity, we grow out of it. (K. Robinson, "How schools kill creativity", TED talk)[4]

Finally, antitheticals can appear over two sentences:

Our campaign was *not* hatched in the halls of Washington. It began in the backyards of Des Moines and the living rooms of Concord and the front porches of Charleston. It was built by working men and women who dug into what little savings they had to give $5 and $10 and $20 to the cause. (…) (B. Obama, victory speech, 2008)

In this case, they cannot be detached, but help to structure the macro-structure of the speech—just like figures of speech based on repetition, which we will turn to in the following chapter.

Notes

1. Source: MacArthur, B. (1995). *The Penguin Book of Historic Speeches*. London: Penguin.
2. Winning speech delivered at the MIT Start-up weekend in 2010 (quoted Chap. 8), transcribed from video retrieved from http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UBNJh2rOOlI. Consulted April 4, 2014.
3. https://www.ted.com/talks/peter_doolittle_how_your_working_memory_makes_sense_of_the_world?language=en.
4. https://www.ted.com/talks/ken_robinson_says_schools_kill_creativity.

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15

Figures of Repetition: Functions

1   Repetition as a Rhetorical Figure

Repetition is everywhere in language. In public speaking, it is introduced in a very deliberate way as a rhetorical figure, to add emphasis and make the speech livelier. But just as importantly—which is why they are being presented in this section of the book—figures of repetition play a key role in structuring the speech. They therefore increase listenability.

In addition, figures of speech have the following functions:

– They contribute to the theatricality of the speech as performance: when the words and/or structures are repeated, they are said with greater intensity or speed, introducing vocal variation;
– They trigger audience participation (mainly in political speeches): in association with vocal variation, repetition creates a build-up and works as a cue for applause: the speaker pauses at the end of the series of repetition and the audience responds via applause and cheering (Atkinson 1984);
– They facilitate the memorisation of the speech for the speaker;

– They construct an authoritative ethos: speakers appear engaged and to know exactly where they are going in their speech; the content appears more emphatic, leaving no place for discussion;
– They trigger emotion (Cockroft and Cockroft 2005) and, depending on the content, are susceptible to present the speaker in the elevated position that characterises Rhetorical Staging (cf. Chap. 9).

Figures of repetition are an inherent part of Rhetorical Staging. They can trigger "rhetorical" moments at precise parts of a speech. These rhetorical moments project the speaker into an elevated position, where they command respect. This is exactly what happens in the speech quoted from Obama's autobiography (cf. Chap. 4). It is thanks to the repetitions that Obama succeeds in stirring his audience and triggering a reaction from them. It is the figures that make us feel as if the speech is bigger than us, and that make us feel uplifted and part of a wider community (e.g. all those involved the world over in the defence of civil rights).

In the classification that follows below, two types of repetition will be distinguished:

1. Repetition of specific words (one word or a group of words);
2. Repetition of a syntactic structure (accumulation).

Repetition of words and accumulation often combine. For instance, in Obama's speech, repetition of the word "between" combines with the repetition of the same syntactic structure, two nouns coordinated by "and" (e.g. "dignity and servitude" and "fairness and injustice"). Similarly, in Lincoln's "government of the people, by the people, for the people", the words "the people" are repeated within the same syntactic structure, a nominal complement introduced by a preposition ("of", "by", "for").

2   Case Study: "I Have a Dream"

Martin Luther King's speech "I have a dream", which exemplifies Rhetorical Staging (cf. Chap. 9), is a *tour de force* in its use of figures of repetition, both in terms of their frequency and in the way they intricately

combine. This much-celebrated speech is famous for its line "I have a dream" and the series of sentences in which this line is repeated, but this is just one of many instances of repetition that form the backbone of the speech.

"I have a dream" is repeated in sentence-initial position and illustrates anaphora. The speech contains five other series of anaphora which, taken together, run over almost 50% of the sentences of the speech (38 out of 80). These appear in the following order:

1. "One hundred years later…" (four instances);
2. "Now is the time…" (four instances);
3. "We cannot/can never be/are not satisfied…" (six instances);
4. "Go back to…" (six instances);
5. "I have a dream…" (eight instances);
6. "Let freedom ring…" (ten instances).

The other most frequent type of repetition in the speech after anaphora is accumulation involving repetition of the structure <NP of NP> (e.g. "the bank of justice"—cf. Chap. 13). It appears 77 times in the speech—that is, on average once for every sentence. Both anaphora and accumulation of the structure <NP of NP> play a pivotal role in the textual organisation of the speech, and are what give the speech such force. They provide the material basis for the vocal variation and emphatic delivery style that characterises the Black American oratory tradition (cf. Chap. 2), and they construe an authoritative ethos resulting from content that is presented as indisputable.

This is exemplified in the sequence reproduced in Table 15.1, a sequence located at the beginning of the peroration, where the dream is introduced. The different types of repetition are classified in the right-hand column and will be presented in detail in the following chapter. To illustrate how the different types of repetition combine, let us take the example of the sentence that launches the anaphoric series "I have a dream that…":

I have a dream that one day even the state of Mississippi, a state sweltering with the heat of injustice sweltering with the heat of injustice and oppression, will be transformed into an oasis of freedom and justice.[1]

Table 15.1 Types of repetition in an extract of Martin Luther King's "I have a dream"

Martin Luther King, beginning of peroration "I have a dream", Washington, August 28, 1963	
[...] Let us not wallow in <u>the valley of despair</u>./	<NP of NP>;
I say to you today, my friends, / so even though we face the difficulties of <u>today and tomorrow</u>,/I still have a dream. /	accumulation (pairing);
<u>It is a dream</u> deeply rooted in the American dream. /	repetition of words (anadiplose);
<u>I have a dream</u> / <u>that one day</u> / this nation will <u>rise up / and live out</u> the true meaning of its creed: "We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men are created equal."	repetition of words (anaphora); accumulation (pairing);
<u>I have a dream</u> / <u>that one day</u> on <u>the red hills of Georgia</u> / <u>the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slave owners</u> / will be able to sit down together at <u>a table of brotherhood</u>.	repetition of words (anaphora); <NP of NP> (2); accumulation (pairing);
<u>I have a dream</u> / <u>that one day</u> / even the state of Mississippi, a state <u>sweltering with the heat of injustice, / sweltering with the heat of injustice and oppression</u>, / will be transformed into <u>an oasis of freedom and justice</u>.	repetition of words (anaphora); repetition of words with re-elaboration; <NP of NP> (3);
<u>I have a dream</u> / <u>that</u> my four little children / will one day live in a nation where they will no longer be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character.	repetition of words (anaphora); <NP of NP> (2);
<u>I have a dream today</u>. / [...]	repetition of words (refrain)

The following figures can be recognised:

- The anaphora "I have a dream that…" (>repetition of words);
- Repetition of the phrase "sweltering with the heat of injustice" (>repetition of words);
- Three instances of the structure <NP of NP>: "the heat of injustice"; "the heat of injustice and oppression"; "an oasis of freedom and justice" (repetition of the same structure);
- The pair of nominal phrases in the last example of <NP of NP>: "an oasis of freedom and justice" (repetition of the same structure).

These figures provide rhythm and guarantee listenability, despite the fact that they introduce syntactic complexity and the sentence does not stop at the basic constituent structure <Subject + Verb + Complement>: the segment that will be repeated in subsequent sentences introduces a subordinate clause ("I have a dream *that* …"), and the subject of this subordinated clause ("even the state of Mississippi") is followed by an apposed nominal phrase ("a state sweltering with…").

The sequence from the 1963 speech can be compared with an excerpt from a speech delivered by Martin Luther King two years beforehand, at Lincoln University, presented in Table 15.2.[2] In the earlier speech, he

Table 15.2 Types of repetition in an extract of Martin Luther King's 1961 commencement address

Martin Luther King, beginning of Lincoln University commencement address, June 6, 1961	
[…] As you go out today to enter the clamorous highways of life, I should like to discuss with you some aspects of the American dream.	<N of N>;
For in a real sense, America is essentially a dream, a dream as yet unfulfilled.	repetition of words (anadiplosis + instant repetition)
It is a dream of a land where men of all races, of all nationalities, and of all creeds can live together as brothers.	repetition of words (anadiplosis); <NP of NP>; accumulation (ternary);
The substance of the dream is expressed in these sublime words, words lifted to cosmic proportions: "We hold these truths to be self-evident—that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness."	
This is the dream.	
One of the first things we notice in this dream is an amazing universalism.	
It does not say some men, but it says all men.	repetition of words (anaphora)
It does not say all white men, but it says all men which includes black men.	repetition of words (all of the sentence except two words that vary)

Table 15.2 (continued)

Martin Luther King, beginning of Lincoln University commencement address, June 6, 1961	
<u>It does not say all</u> gentiles, <u>but it says all men which includes</u> Jews.	repetition of words (all of the sentence except two words that vary)
<u>It does not say all</u> Protestants, <u>but it says all men which includes</u> Catholics.	repetition of words (all of the sentence except two words that vary)
And there is another thing we see in this dream that ultimately distinguishes <u>democracy and our form of government</u> from all of the totalitarian regimes that emerge in history.	accumulation (pairing)

introduces for the first time the theme of the dream, which he would then "recycle" and develop over subsequent speeches. The speech is a commencement address, delivered at a college graduation ceremony. This is a genre that favours not Rhetorical Staging but the staging of a direct interaction with the audience. While the speech contains figures of repetition, they are far less frequent compared to the 1963 speech. Dr King's commencement address alternates between parts where he uses argument to convince the audience and that are more interactive—in keeping with the genre of the commencement address—and parts where figures of repetition, which trigger Rhetorical Staging, present content as indisputable, where an authoritative ethos prevails.

While they are not as frequent in other speeches, figures of repetition are present in all speech genres in English. The many forms that they take are presented in the following chapter.

Notes

1. Many texts exist for this speech. This book features extracts transcribed by the author, from the video retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I47Y6VHc3Ms.
2. http://www.thekingcenter.org/archive/document/american-dream#.

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16

Repetition of Words and Accumulation: A Typology

This chapter presents a typology of repetition, beginning with the categories involving the repetition of words, followed by those that involve the repetition of a syntactic structure (accumulation).

1   Repetition of Words (One Word or a Group of Words)

Anaphora

Anaphora is the most striking and also the most frequent type of repetition used in public address. Anaphora involves the repetition of a group of words at the beginning of a sentence or a clause. Because the repetition is located in initial position, it is relatively easy to integrate into a speech, even when the production is close to spontaneous.

For the repetition to be noticeable and have impact, it needs to involve more than one word. And the longer the group of words, the more impact the repetition will have. For example, repeating only the grammatical subject, particularly if it is a pronoun, will not stand out enough to

produce any rhetorical effect. It needs to be repeated in conjunction with another word—that is, the verb. For instance, "I will" is commonly used for anaphora in political speeches, just like "let us".

Similarly, the higher the number of repetitions, the greater will be their effect. To be noticeable, a segment needs to be repeated a minimum of three times. In Martin Luther King's speech, the anaphora "Let freedom ring" appears ten times. The more it is repeated, the less the audience pays attention to the literal meaning of the words, which become like a chant and communicate meaning at an interpersonal and emotional level.

> *We shall* go on to the end, *we shall fight* in France, *we shall* fight on the seas and oceans, we shall fight with growing confidence and growing strength in the air, we shall defend our Island, whatever the cost may be, **we shall fight** on the beaches, *we shall fight* on the landing grounds, *we shall fight* in the fields and in the streets, *we shall fight* in the hills; *we shall* never surrender [...] (W. Churchill, June 4 1940)
>
> We're targeting it also for education, they want to buy these, and *it's perfect for* most of the things they do in instruction, *it's perfect for* finding tremendous source of information over the Internet, and we hope as you see the product, it will inspire us all to make even better products in the future. (S. Jobs, keynote, iMac launch, 1998)

Repetition in End Position

The other most striking form of repetition involves placing the words in end position (*epistrophe*), be it at the end of the sentence or the end of a group of words, as in Abraham Lincoln's famous phrase "government of the people, by the people, for the people". Focus is placed on "the people" but even more on each word situated just to the left which varies ("of", "by", "for").

> The time for the healing of the wounds *has come*. / The moment to bridge /the chasms that divide us / *has come*. / The time to build is upon us. / (N. Mandela, inaugural address)
>
> No one cared about letting people take a smoke break for 15 minutes 10 years ago, so why does everyone care about someone going to Facebook

here and there, or Twitter *here and there*, or YouTube *here and there*? (J. Fried, "Why work doesn't happen at work" TED talk)[1]

Repetition Simultaneously in Initial and Final Position

Anaphora and epistrophe can combine in clauses or sentences that contain repetition in both initial and final position. The words situated in between are framed by the repetition, which place focus on them.

> Let there be *justice* for all. / Let there be *peace* for all. / Let there be *work, / bread, / water / and salt* for all. (N. Mandela, inaugural address)
>
> And uh the Global Fund provides antiretroviral drugs that stop mothers from passing JIV to their kids. This fantastic news didn't happen by itself. It was *fought* for, it was *campaigned* for, it was *innovated* for. (Bono, "The good news on poverty […]" TED talk)

Refrain

Like the chorus of a song, or a refrain, an entire clause or sentence can be repeated at intervals throughout the speech. For example, in Martin Luther King's speech, the series of anaphora "I have a dream that" alternates with the refrain (repetition of the sentence) "I have a dream today".

> I have a dream / that my four little children / will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character. *I have a dream today.* I have a dream / that one day down in Alabama, with its vicious racists, with its governor having his lips dripping with the words of interposition and nullification, one day right down in Alabama, little black boys and black girls will be able to join hands with little white boys and white girls as sisters and brothers. *I have a dream today.* (M. L. King, August 28, 1963)
>
> And the only way to do great work is to love what you do. / If you haven't found it yet, keep looking, and *don't settle*. / As with all matters of the heart, you'll know when you find it. And, like any great relationship, it just gets better and better as the years roll on. So keep looking. / *Don't settle*. (S. Jobs, commencement address, Stanford)

Instant Repetition

Instant repetition of a word or group of words (*epizeuxis*) is easy to introduce into a speech delivered in spontaneous mode. It creates emphasis in combination with vocal variation (louder and/or faster voice).

> But above all, I will never forget who this victory truly belongs to. *It belongs to you./ It belongs to you./* (B. Obama, victory speech, 2008)
>
> And the peculiar thing is that I recently wrote this book, this memoir called "Eat, Pray, Love" which, decidedly unlike any of my previous books, went out in the world for some reason, and became this big, mega-sensation, international bestseller thing. The result of which is that everywhere I go now, people treat me like I'm doomed. Seriously, *doomed, doomed*. (E. Gilbert "Your elusive creative genius", TED talk)

Linear Repetition

Linear repetition (*anadiplosis*) entails repeating at the beginning of a new sentence a group of words located at the very end of the previous sentence. The repetition reinforces discourse continuity, emphatically launches the new sentence and also allows the speaker to bide time. Politicians use this to reclaim the floor and pick up the thread of their speech where they had left off before being interrupted by applause and/or cheers from the audience.

> And when I am President of the United States, *we will end this war / in Iraq / and bring our troops home.* / [applause] *We will end this war in Iraq, / we will bring our troops home*, / we will finish the job, / we will finish the job against al Qaeda in Afghanistan; / we will care for our veterans; /we will restore our moral standing in the world. (B. Obama, New Hampshire, January 8, 2008)

Instant Repetition in Initial Position

Another type of repetition combines the characteristics of the previous two. Words are repeated at the beginning of the sentence. The group of words coincides with a syntactic constituent (e.g. subject, or adverbial

complement). Like linear repetition, the repetition emphatically launches the sentence and allows the speaker to bide time. Suspense is created by the fact that the speaker delays revealing the rest of the sentence, and it is heightened by pausing. This type of repetition is used in political speeches and other types of address that play on theatricality and suspense. Interestingly, it is generally removed from the published transcripts.

> *This will be the day, this will be the day* when all of God's children will be able to sing with a new meaning, "My country, 'tis of thee, sweet land of liberty, of thee I sing. Land where my fathers died, land of the pilgrim's pride, from every mountainside, let freedom ring." (M. L. King, August 28, 1963)
> *Today, / today*, Apple is going to reinvent the phone. (S. Jobs, keynote, iPhone launch, 2007)

Repetition Combined with Variation

One variant does not technically qualify as a figure of repetition but is included here because it also generates emphasis. The words that are repeated are not absolutely identical and include a slight variation. This type of repetition is typical of conversation and is used in public address to echo the spontaneity and interaction of conversation. They increase the listenability of the speech. Common types include:

– repetition + addition of a word (e.g. an intensifying adverb):

> And Peace Direct spotted quite early on that local people in areas of very hot conflict *know what to do. They know <u>best</u> what to do.* So Peace Direct gets behind them to do that. (S. Elworthy, "Fighting violence with non-violence", TED talk)

– repetition + the replacement of a word by another (e.g. an intensifying adverb):

> And we noticed some things about them pretty much universally. The first is *they're really slow. They're very slow*, they're all using last year's processor. *Very, very slow*. (S. Jobs, keynote, iMac launch, 1998)

– repetition in condensed form (e.g. "very high quality"):

5 gigabytes, which holds 1000 songs at 160 kilobit rate, which is *a very high quality rate of MP3 compression, very high quality*. (S. Jobs, keynote, iPod launch, 2001)

– repetition in condensed form + addition of an intensifying adverb:

Make a decision to live a carbon-neutral life. Those of you who are good at branding, I'd love to get your advice and help on how to say this in a way that connects with the most people. *It is easier than you think. It really is.* (A. Gore, "Averting the climate crisis", TED talk)

– repetition in analytical form (presupposed content is made explicit):

The real problems are what I like to call the M&Ms, the Managers and the Meetings. Those are *the real problems <u>in the modern office today</u>*. And this is why things don't get done at work—it's because of the M&Ms. (J. Fried, "Why work doesn't happen at work", TED talk)

– repetition in analytical form (one out of several possibilities of presupposed content is made explicit):

It like it's *from another planet, and a good planet. A planet <u>with better designers</u>*. Look at this keyboard, it's so nice […] (S. Jobs, keynote, iMac launch, 1998)

– repetition with a change of grammatical subject (e.g. "people"> "you"—with, in this case, the inclusion of an antithetical structure):

[…] this is what happens: *people* go to work, and they're basically trading in their workday for a series of "*work moments*." That's what happens at the office. You don't have a workday anymore. *<u>You have</u> work moments*. (J. Fried, "Why work doesn't happen at work", TED talk)

2   Accumulation

Accumulation is the repetition of the same *syntactic* structure—that is, the addition of like constituents, filling the same syntactic role. The most common types of accumulation concern the stringing together of noun phrases (e.g. "moved by a sense of *joy and exhilaration*"—N. Mandela) or adjectives (e.g. "it is altogether *fitting and proper*"—A. Lincoln). This type of repetition is amplified when associated with other rhetorical figures and poetic effects (e.g. alliteration, rhyme: "My second story is about *love and loss*"—S. Jobs, Stanford commencement address).

Pairings

Two, three or more items can be strung together. Pairs, or pairings, are common:

> If one and all we keep resolutely faithful to it, ready for whatever *service or sacrifice* it may demand, then, with God's help, we shall prevail. (King George V, September 3, 1939)

Ternary Units

Accumulation involving three items is even more striking:

> *Dare, risk and risk again*. I wish you the strength to respond to your inner voice, it's always seeking *goodness, happiness and peace* for you. (N. Gemmell, "A letter to my goddaughter", TED talk)

Ternary sequences are prevalent in discourse and rhetoric, where we talk about "the rule of three". A unit made up of three parts is considered well balanced and complete. When addressees hear two items, they expect a third and are ready to wait for it, without interrupting the speaker even if

there is a pause (Atkinson 1984). Conversely, beyond three items, addressees get impatient and tend to interrupt. In public speaking, ternary units create a build-up and work as cues for applause. A series of three questions is common:

> When you're faced with brutality, whether it's a child facing a bully on a playground or domestic violence—or, on the streets of Syria today, facing tanks and shrapnel, what's the most effective thing to do? *Fight back? Give in? Use more force?* (S. Elworthy, "Fighting violence with non-violence, TED talk)

Another frequent pattern is a ternary unit in which the final constituent introduces a contrast (e.g. <A, B, but C>):

> This is your victory. *And I know you didn't do this just to win an election. And I know you didn't do it for me. You did it* because you understand the enormity of the task that lies ahead. (B. Obama, victory speech 2008)

+ 3 Items

Beyond three items, speaker will often group the items in pairs. This is common in political speeches that are concerned with federating a community. The following speech features an example of accumulation containing three pairs of adjectives and then two pairs of nouns:

> There is something happening when / people vote not just for the party that they belong to but the hopes, / the hopes they hold in common, / that whether we are *rich or poor, / black or white, / Latino or Asian*, / whether we hail from *Iowa or New Hampshire, / Nevada or South Carolina*, / we are ready to take this country / in a fundamentally new direction. (B. Obama, New Hampshire, January 8, 2008)

Asyndeton and Polysyndeton

To string items together in English, the coordinator "and" generally precedes the final item and signals closure. Preceding items are juxtaposed

between commas which are rendered orally by a fall–rise intonation pattern. However, speakers can create emphasis via the rhetorical figures of asyndeton or polysyndeton. Asyndeton involves the ellipsis of a connective in a position where it is expected, as in the famous "veni, vidi, vici"— "I came, I saw, I conquered", for which the expected form in English would be "I came, I saw and I conquered". Asyndeton is extremely marked in English. It is rare in public address, although Steve Jobs liked to use it:

> It's stainless steel, it's really really durable, it's beautiful. (S. Jobs, keynote, iPod launch, 2001)
> You have to trust in something, / *your gut, destiny, life, karma, whatever.* (S. Jobs, commencement address, Stanford)

Conversely, polysyndeton consists in repeating the coordinator "and" between each item. It is more common than asyndeton in public speaking:

> […] the vast stretches of *the unknown and the unanswered and the unfinished* still far outstrip our collective comprehension […] (J. F. Kennedy, September 12, 1962)
> I wish you *tall skies, and birdsong, and a canopy of green to shade you, and a hurting sun on your face and your back when you need to uncurl from the cold.* (N. Gemmell, "A letter from my goddaughter", TED talk)

Note

1. https://www.ted.com/talks/jason_fried_why_work_doesn_t_happen_at_work.

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17

Macro-Organisation

The main focus of the previous chapters has been on the organisation within the sentence. The following chapters deal with structuring at a more global, macro level of the speech. This chapter introduces points that are taken up in detail in the following two chapters.

1   Make Your Speech Easy to Follow

As noted in the comparison between conversation and writing (cf. Chap. 6), written discourse is organised globally, while conversation is organised locally. Public speaking is like writing in that it requires structuring at the macro level: like writing, it is based on a monologue set-up, which necessitates some planning by the speaker, and where audiences are at the receiving end of a block of discourse that they cannot interrupt. Making the organisation of the speech clear to the audience is essential for listenability, and also contributes to an authoritative ethos—that of a speaker who knows exactly what he/she wants to say and where he/she is going. In addition, by "looking out" for your audience, and taking a number of precautions to make your speech easy to follow, you demonstrate an

essential component of ethos—that of goodwill to your audience—which will make them more inclined to listen to you.

The macro-organisation of your speech will be easy to follow if you pay attention to the following:

1. Announce the "roadmap" of your speech from the beginning and refer back to it frequently;
2. Conform to the expected organisation of the speech genre and to culturally popular patterns of organisation;
3. Use explicit structuring devices typical of public speaking in English.

2   Announce Your Roadmap

When preparing your script, you need to keep first and foremost in mind the task of the audience, and abide by the adage presented in Chap. 5: "Tell them what you're going to tell them, then tell them, then tell them you've told them." The audience will be able to follow your speech more easily—and also be more willing to make the effort to do so—if they are "prepped": that is, if they are presented from the beginning with a "roadmap" as regards the organisation of the speech. Then, as you move through it, it is important to refer back to this roadmap regularly, by indicating where you are at in the speech: the audience will seize the pertinence of a specific point if they know how it relates to the whole.

The organisation, or the outline, of a speech is announced in broad terms, and often via use of metaphor—for instance, that of the roadmap. Unlike some other cultures (e.g. Romance-language cultures), outlines in English will not be announced in a detailed or technical way. "Outline" means exactly that: it refers to the shape, contours or bounds of an object; it is used discursively to designate "a general description or plan showing the essential features of something but not the detail".[1] A speech should be able to be summed up in two or three main points. More than three points will be counterproductive and place the audience in cognitive overload. In addition, it is not necessary to announce in advance

"sub-points". To announce the main points, general expressions will be used, such as "I'm going to discuss two aspects of…", or "I'll first start by …and then I'll go on to…".

In keeping with the roadmap metaphor, "signposts" (signs placed on the side of the road, generally at junctions, to indicate directions) will be used in the body of your speech to indicate where you are at. You need to make explicit transitions between the main points of your speech via expressions such as "so that was basically the first point I wanted to make", or "I will now move on to my second point". This is particularly important to allow members of the audience to pick up the thread of the speech again—those who have switched off for a moment and have not been following your speech, which will inevitably happen, however much you try to prevent it.

3 Conform to the Expected Organisation of the Speech Genre and to Culturally Popular Patterns of Organisation

Audiences will be able to follow a speech if its organisation conforms to their expectations. Expectations are created at two levels:

– At a global level, where they depend on the speech genre: for instance, scientific conferences generally begin by reviewing previous research before presenting the new research, sales pitches follow a problem–solution format, TED talks begin with a story, and so on;
– At a more local level, where ideas are organised logically according to culturally popular patterns.

At the local level, discourse is organised according to a number of "culturally popular patterns" (Hoey 2001). These patterns have a structuring effect and are recurrent within a given culture—that is, they are not universal but reflect the logic of a specific culture. The most common patterns in Western cultures like English are as follows:

– Chronological ordering of events;
– <Problem + Solution> (including <Question + Response>);
– <Claim + Justification>;
– <Observation + Evaluation>;
– <General + Specific>;
– Contrast (including <Concession + Counter-argument>);
– Lists ("matching" relations).

These patterns will be illustrated below, as well as in the following section. As addressees read or listen to a piece of discourse, they subconsciously associate what they are hearing with one of these culturally popular patterns. They are familiar with these patterns because they have encountered them time and time again over various genres within their culture. The association simultaneously sets up an expectation in the mind of the addressee—again subconsciously—about what will come next in the discourse. At each step, the addressee is reading between the lines. If the writer/speaker does not conform to the expectation, the addressee will be disoriented, even irritated, and this will affect listenability. For example, after hearing the following sentence,

> Ladies and gentlemen, I truly believe that direct, face-to-face communication, is ever-important and has a true role to play in the world today,

we can expect that the speaker will go on to back up this belief by way of a justification, according to the pattern <Claim + Justification>. A personal opinion is far less likely to be accepted by a third party, at least in Western culture, if it is not followed by some attempt to justify or explain it. This pattern is particularly central to any type of persuasive speech. The following sequence would work as a convincing follow-up to the sentence above:

> We live in a day and age where machine communication seems to have taken over, where everybody is on their mobile phone, where people hide behind text messages and emails. And this has turned face-to-face communication into somewhat of a rare commodity. But at the same time, face-to face communication has not been fully replaced by communication

mediated by technology. Look around you. Companies have not cut out board meetings, where board members have to be physically present for important decision making. Friends still organise to meet up face to face for a drink that would not taste as good if you were sitting in front of a computer screen. And most grandparents would prefer to see their grand-children in the flesh rather than view them via the intermediary of Skype.

This sequence presents a justification that divides into subparts, each of which sets up a new expectation:

– the verb "seem" in the first sentence realises a concession which we associate with the pattern <Concession + Counter-argument>, and therefore sets up the expectation of the counter-argument that will indeed follow two sentences later, announced by "But";
– the sentence beginning with "but" expresses a claim, for which the justification will follow in the form of a three-part list: "Companies… Friends… And most grandparents…";
– These three sentences each provide an example to illustrate one common point, and therefore enter into a matching relation.

When you review the script of your speech, it is recommended that you check that the order in which you place your ideas conforms to these culturally popular patterns. Just like the way you manage information, by, for example, maintaining topic continuity between sentences (cf. Chap. 13), this logical ordering of ideas makes the speech easier to follow.

4   Use Explicit Structuring Devices

A variety of words and expressions in English serve as explicit structuring devices. A first point to underline is that their use can depend on the speech genre. For example, numbering points via ordinal numbers (e.g. "first" and "second") or ordinal adverbs (e.g. "firstly" and "secondly") is a common technique in sales pitches and business presentations—where they help construe a business-like, professional ethos. In contrast, they are not as frequent in political speeches, where more subtle means are

generally used to organise the discourse, such as figures of repetition, or short sentences and one-liners (which, when used as a punchline, indirectly signal the end of a section).

The range of explicit structuring devices at your disposal is illustrated in the following extract, taken from an early keynote. The extract coincides with a product demonstration. Product demonstrations mark a specific moment of a speech, when language is used to accompany the action that is taking place on stage. The audience is being "talked through" the demonstration, and there is a heightened sense of staging an interaction. Before beginning the demonstration, the speaker turns to address one of the functions of the product, that of colour:

> *So* let's examine colour. We wanted the best quality colour. *So* how do we find it? *Well first* we have to say what is quality? How do we define quality? We define it in *two ways. One* is by the number of colours. Most companies ship systems with 8-bit colour which give you only 256 colours on the screen. While that is enough to do pink borders around your windows and purple menus, [applause] it is not enough, [applause] it is not enough to put a photograph on the screen, which is what we believe the true market opportunity is. (S. Jobs, NeXT Station launch, September 15, 1990)[2]

Let us first take the opportunity to check for the culturally popular patterns listed in the previous section. This passage is based on the alternation between two culturally popular patterns, <General + Specific> and <Question + Response>, together with one instance of a matching relation. These patterns intertwine and structure the discourse in the following way:

– <General + Specific>: "So let's examine colour" + "We wanted…"
– <Question + Response>: "So how do we find it" + "Well first…"
– <Question + Response>: "Well first we…"; "How do we…" + "We define it…"
– Matching relation: "Well first we…"; "How do we…"
– <General + Specific>: "We define it in two ways" + "One is…"
– <General + Specific>: "One is by the number of colours" + "Most companies ship…"

These patterns are, in some instances, signalled explicitly. The topic of the sequence is announced via the imperative form introduced by "so" ("So let's examine colour"). "So" is used again two sentences later, in front of the first <Question + Response> pattern ("So how do we find it?"). The response that follows immediately is signalled by "well" combined with the ordinal number "first" launching another <Question + Response> pattern in two parts (what? how?) that exemplifies repetition with variation (cf. Chap. 16). The answer is announced as containing two parts by way of a cardinal number ("we define it *in two ways*"), the first of which is signalled by another cardinal ("*One* is by…").

The demonstration proper begins several lines later:

> […] *The first thing I want to show you* is the quality of the colour. This is a GE projection system, it is nowhere near as vivid as the real monitor. Here we have the image of a beach and uh a mountain in the background, and *one of the things I'm going to do* is I'm going to bring up a Ferrari here.

Here, an ordinal number appears as part of a noun phrase ("the *first* thing I want to show you"). It announces an extralinguistic intention (intended action) on the part of the speaker, which, because we are being talked through the demonstration, structures the speech itself (cf. <General + Specific> pattern here). The same can be said of the noun phrase "one of the things I'm going to do" following closely after it. Then follows the step-by-step part of the demonstration:

> *Now* this is how every other computer if it could would bring up the Ferrari *and* I'm sure it wouldn't be able to move it around much *but* let's say it could, that's not so exciting. I'm going to go use a feature that's built into every NeXT system and eliminate the black background and show the transparency *and* if you look carefully you'll see you can even see the mountain through the windshield. [applause] These are full 32-bit colour images that we're looking at, *and* we have added an Intel I860 on a board we call NeXT dimension inside our cube. *So* this is what our NeXT dimension board looks like. *Let me go through the features briefly*.

The sentences are longer here and resemble more closely spontaneous conversation (and suggest that production may well be spontaneous at

this precise moment of the speech). "Now" introduces the key idea of the passage: that is, the disparaging contrast with the competitor's product. The coordinators "and" and "but" are also used, as well as "so", which announces a transition to another concrete part of the demonstration, announced via the imperative form ("Let me go through the features briefly").

 Some of the same forms appear in the following extract, taken from a TED talk. The adverb "so" is used frequently and is the only connective to appear in the first part of the sequence:

> *So what I'm going to do is show you* how to spot a couple of classic moves, dead giveaways, really, for what's variously been called neuro-bunk, neuro-bollocks, or, my personal favorite, neuro-flapdoodle. Here's a study published by a team of researchers as an op-ed in The New York Times. [appears on slide] The headline? "You love your iPhone. Literally". It quickly became the most emailed article on the site. *So* how'd they figure this out? They put 16 people inside a brain scanner and showed them videos of ringing iPhones. The brain scans showed activation in a part of the brain called the insula, a region they say is linked to feelings of love and compassion. *So* they concluded that because they saw activation in the insula, this meant the subjects loved their iPhones. (S. Jobs, NeXT Station launch, September 15, 1990)[3]

In the first instance, "so" precedes the emphatic cleft structure with "what" that introduces the topic of this part of the speech (cf. <General + Specific> pattern) (and another emphatic, ternary structure follows: "neuro-bunk, neuro-bollocks, or, my personal favorite, neuro-flapdoodle"). In the second instance, it precedes a question, which also pushes the discourse along to a new point. The ternary structure The speaker continues by announcing a moment of truth—or "the crunch"—via the adverb "now", which carries a very similar meaning to "the point here is" featuring several lines later:

> *Now* there's just one problem with this line of reasoning, and that's that the insula does a lot. *Sure*, it is involved in positive emotions like love and compassion, *but* it's also involved in tons of other processes, like memory, language, attention, even anger, disgust and pain. *So* based on the same

logic, I could equally conclude you hate your iPhone. *The point here is*, when you see activation in the insula, you can't just pick and choose your favourite explanation from off this list, and it's a really long list. […] *So speaking of love and the brain*, there's a researcher, known to some as Dr. Love, who claims that scientists have found the glue that holds society together, the source of love and prosperity. (M. Crocket, "Beware neuro-bunk", TED talk)

This passage also features "sure" and "but", which each signal a component of the pattern <Concession + Counter-argument>. "So" appears again twice, the last time in association with the explicit identification of the current local topic ("speaking of…"), which is moreover followed by the introduction of a new topic in two stages ("*there's a researcher, known to some as Dr. Love*, who claims that…") (cf. Chap. 13).

Comparing these two speech extracts, the explicit structuring devices fall into one of several categories:

- the adverbs "so", "well" and "now" which are part of the category of discourse markers;
- the coordinators "and" and "but";
- cardinal and ordinal numbers (e.g. "one" and "first");
- the adjective "sure" which has an adverbial function and expresses subjectivity (like "of course", "honestly", "frankly", "surprisingly");
- emphatic forms: "what I'm going to show/do/talk about…"; "the point here is…"; "speaking of…".

In addition, the imperative and interrogative forms play a role in guiding us through the discourse. All these forms are typical of conversation, and some are rare in writing. They therefore not only make the speech structure explicit, but also contribute to the staging of the interaction—hence their use despite the fact that the speeches conform to culturally popular patterns. While these two speech extracts simulate interaction to a degree that would not be appropriate in all speech genres, which explains the high frequency with which they use some of the devices, their intermittent use will still be preferred in most speech genres to some of the heavier structuring only found in writing. Certain devices also serve a number of pragmatic functions, which are presented in the following chapter.

Notes

1. *Oxford Dictionary*.
2. This extract and further extracts transcribed from video retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jpHhU0hvxEI.
3. Transcribed from video retrieved https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jpHhU0hvxEI.

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18

Connectives

This chapter focuses on one category of explicit structuring devices presented in the previous chapter: that of connectives.

1   Problems with Non-native Speakers' Use of Connectives

"Connectives" are the category of words that link clauses or sentences. They include coordinating conjunctions ("and", "but", "or"), subordinating conjunctions ("because", "while", "when" etc.) and adverbs and adverbial phrases ("also", "in addition", "however", "conversely", "so", "therefore" etc.). Coordinating and subordinating conjunctions always appear in clause-initial position, while the position of adverbs and adverbial phrases is more flexible. Connectives belong to the cohesive category of conjunction, which is made up of words that "express certain meanings which presuppose the presence of other components in the discourse" and which specify "the way in which what is to follow is systematically connected to what has gone before" (Halliday and Hasan

1976: 227). Connectives can be divided into four main semantic categories: additive, adversative, causal and temporal relations.

Nowadays, much ESL teaching focuses on the use of connectives. In a number of countries, pedagogy is based on giving out lists of connectives to students and encouraging them to use them without necessarily explaining the specificity of each. This seems to have created in the minds of many non-native speakers the impression that connectives are necessary to make the logical organisation of the discourse clear and should be used frequently. However, this is a fallacy. More than 50% of clause and sentence linkage in written texts do not involve a connective. Quite often, writing by non-native students, including the written scripts of speeches, seems to superimpose connectives onto sentences which are superfluous and in fact hinder comprehension. Connectives appear periodically, and are not necessary to guarantee the flow between sentences or clauses, which depends first and foremost on the presence of culturally popular patterns and topic continuity.

Another aspect that is not sufficiently underlined is the extent to which connectives are genre-sensitive (Martin 2001): that is, the types of connectives used, as well as their frequency, will vary depending on the genre. Moreover, there are clear contrasts between oral and written language. This raises the issue of their use in public address. The speeches examined in the previous chapter exhibit connectives that echo conversation for which public speaking has developed specific uses.

Connectives belonging to the same semantic category (e.g. causal relation) are not necessarily equivalent. They express other pragmatic meanings which lead to their misuse in certain contexts—such as the way the subordinating conjunction "since" is used in the following sentence taken from a sales pitch:

> ? We are initially targeting the British market, specifically the London market, since tourists will be our main consumers. (Student's investor pitch)

"Since" introduces a justification for the choice of market announced in the previous clause. It presents the justification as going without saying, or presupposed, both for the speaker and for the addressee. This is not the case for "because", another subordinating conjunction that also introduces

a justification, but a justification presented as new, or newsworthy, and that is emphasised far more than that introduced by "since". "Because" would therefore better suit the context of this investor pitch as it highlights the speaker's own reasoning process: it presents the speaker as responsible, in keeping with the ethos of the innovative leader that underpins the sales pitch. In addition, "because" is far more frequent than "since" in oral language and so is likely to appear more natural when the aim is to simulate spontaneous production. A similar difficulty can be identified in the use of "actually" below:

> ? Mid-term, we're aiming at extending to Europe and then to sub Saharan Africa where the Power Bank will be a real plus. Actually, as soon as we get to reduce costs, we'll reach people even further afield. (Student's investor pitch)

Pragmatically, "actually" expresses a meaning that is exactly the opposite of "since": it presents the content it introduces as new and quite surprisingly. Such a meaning is not appropriate in the context of this sales pitch, where the speaker is talking about market expansion and should avoid presenting expansion as surprising when trying to convince investors of the product's potential. It is difficult to see the point of using a connective here, although "and" could be used to signal the end of a list, if this is indeed the last sentence about market expansion.

Two connectives that are often misused and overused by non-native students are "indeed" and "besides". Both are far more common in written language than spoken language, particularly when used at the very beginning of the sentence. In conversation, "indeed" generally appears either on its own, or in combination with another adverb (e.g. "yes, indeed"), or within or at the end of the sentence (e.g. "It was indeed a challenge for those involved in the project"; "He was a lovely man indeed"). Its meaning varies greatly depending on the intonation and, when heavily stressed, carries the same meaning as the emphatic use of "do" (e.g. "yes indeed" = "I agree with you, despite what people may think").

"Besides" is often used in a list of arguments, where it is mistaken for a synonym for "moreover". However, unlike "moreover", which enhances

the argument it introduces, "besides" presents the content as if it were an afterthought, downgrading its argumentative weight, close to the concessive value of "anyway". Instead of "besides", other additive adverbials such as "in addition" or "as well" will be preferred:

? Besides, there are other ways to fight poverty in the world.
• In addition, there are other ways to fight poverty in the world.

Below is a list of connectives that are to be avoided in public address. As well as those already discussed, the list includes connectives which are inappropriate because they sound "too formal or stilted" (Atkinson 2004: 112) for most contemporary speech genres. Many are in reality limited to very specific written genres (e.g. academic writing; legalese):

Indeed
Besides
The former, the latter…
Then (meaning is uniquely temporal and not causal)
As far as I'm concerned (generally misused by non-native speakers; this
    expression should only be used only to announce a very personal
    opinion in a polemic conversation)
Whereas
Thereafter
With regard to
In respect of
In accordance with
Hitherto
Henceforth
In the event of
Prior to

Public address has developed specific uses of discourse markers and coordinating conjunctions, which will be presented in what follows. These not only participate in the staging of the interaction, but contribute to the casual speaking style associated with Anglo-Saxon ethos. When a more formal ethos is required, contemporary speeches use intermittently

a very limited number of connectives belonging to the category of adverbials:

> However, in contrast, conversely (adversative relation)
> Therefore (cause—consequence)
> For example, For instance (example)
> In other words (reformulation)

Indeed, these are among the connectives which contribute not just to logos, but to ethos, by "giving the impression that they are making their case in a rational way" (Ducrot 2004).

2 Discursive Markers

Discursive markers are a fairly heterogeneous category of adverbials, the main ones being "now", "well", "you know", "I mean", "mind you" and "so". With the exception of "so", these markers are not used in written English: rather, they are typical of conversation and play a key role in managing turn-taking. They appear at the beginning of a turn, when a speaker "takes over" from another. Discourse markers are defined as "sequentially dependent elements that bracket units of talk" (Schriffin 1987: 13). They "signal special sequential relatedness in talk, information which is very relevant in determining the boundaries of conversational exchanges" (Eggins and Slade 1997: 37–38). Similar roles are identified for the coordinating conjunctions "and" and "but" when used at the beginning of a turn (Schriffin 1987).

These markers have all developed specific uses in public address, and are present in all genres, including political speeches. They feature in the rhetoric of Abraham Lincoln: for instance, "now" and "well" appear in a famous speech he made in 1854 entitled "The monstrous injustice of slavery". However, they are not used as frequently in political speeches when compared for example with the formats of the New Oratory. Interestingly, the only discourse marker spoken by Martin Luther King in his 1963 speech has been removed from the transcriptions:

> *Now* there are those who are asking the devotees of civil rights, "When will you be satisfied?" (M. L. King, August 28, 1963)

Now

Now is the ultimate discursive marker of public address. In frequency, it is one of the four most common connectives,[1] just behind "and", "but" and "so", well ahead of other discursive markers such as "well" and "you know". In conversation, "now" marks a change in the orientation of the discourse; it clears "a bit of conversational space" (Biber et al. 1999: 1088). Its role is very similar in public address, where it indicates that the speaker is moving to a new point, and at the same time confers information focus—as illustrated in the example from Martin Luther King quoted above. This focus can be explained by the fact that—just like all discursive markers that are recommended in public address—it signals a high level of speaker involvement. In the case of "now", this focus is accentuated by the link with its (original) meaning as a temporal adverb which suggests coincidence with the moment of delivery—and therefore accentuates the pertinence of the content it introduces. In addition, it has developed a very specific role in transitions (cf. Chap. 19).

Well

Well produces a particularly interactive tone as it marks the speaker's reactivity and "aliveness" to the exchange. It generally introduces an evaluation by the speaker, or the response to a question, and suggests that this evaluation or response has *just come into the mind* of the speaker—and that he/she is thinking in real time. It hence simulates spontaneous speech. The following example from a speech by Barack Obama is typical:

> But there were those who doubted this country's desire for something new, who said Iowa was a fluke, not to be repeated again. *Well*, tonight, the cynics who believed that what began in the snows of Iowa was just an illusion were told a different story by the good people of South Carolina. (B. Obama, New Hampshire, January 8, 2008)

Here, *well* comes after a first sentence, introduced by "but", and "rules out any pertinence to the previous discourse" (Schriffin 1987)—specifically the hypothesis that Obama's victory in Iowa may have been an accident ("a fluke"). "Well" also suggests that this hypothesis is dismissed at the very moment Obama says this, that it takes effect through the speech itself—which is the case here, as Obama delivers this speech just after having won the Democrat nomination. Like "oh", "well" does not carry precise semantic content (unlike "now", for example), which makes it available to play the role of a general response marker (Schriffin 1987).

"I Mean"

"I mean" is different to the previous two markers in that it is not just one word but a verbal phrase containing the first-person pronoun "I" as subject. As a discourse marker, "I mean" retains the meanings attached to the use of "mean" as a lexical verb ("express", "intend", "have importance"). In public address, it coincides with the justification of a claim made in the previous sentence:

> Nobody has a clue, despite all the expertise that's been on parade for the past four days, what the world will look like in five years' time. And yet we're meant to be educating them for it. So the unpredictability, I think, is extraordinary. And the third part of this is that we've all agreed, nonetheless, on the really extraordinary capacities that children have, their capacities for innovation. *I mean*, Sirena last night was a marvel, wasn't she? (K. Robinson, "How schools kill creativity", TED talk)

Here, "I mean" introduces the justification of the claim regarding the "extraordinary capacities that children have". Generally, the justification slightly modifies the claim. "I mean" can be used instead as an equivalent to "for example", with the additional meaning that the speaker is reacting in real time—as if he/she has decided at the last minute that the claim needs some justification.

You Know

You know signals a "change in informational status" (Schriffin 1987). It plays on the meaning of the lexical verb "know" to attract attention to the content while, at the same time, presenting this content as given information—as unsurprising, or "known" to the audience. In addition, complicity is created thanks to the second-person pronoun "you". "You know" appears particularly frequently in TED talks and keynotes. In the following sequence, it appears twice, the first time in association with "now":

> Now, *you know*, one of the pioneers of our industry, Alan Kay, has had a lot of great quotes throughout the years. And I ran across one of them recently that explains how we look at this. Explains why we go about doing things the way we do, cause we love software. And here's the quote: "People who are really serious about software should make their own hardware." *You know*, Alan said this 30 years ago, and this is how we feel about it. (S. Jobs, keynote, iPhone launch, 2007)

"You know" is useful here as it underlines the pertinence of a quotation dating back to 30 years ago, which otherwise would have remained distant for the audience. "You know" therefore proves valuable in injecting new pertinence and triggering a new interest in old information.

Yes and *No*

We will briefly mention here the adverbs "yes" and "no", categorised in English as "continuatives". In public address, they are common in a context where no explicit question has been raised previously. However, they suggest an implicit question, increase the interactivity of the speech and suggest reasoning that takes place in the here and now. They are useful tools to place at the beginning of a sentence, often in front of other interactive markers (e.g. the term of address "ladies and gentlemen"), to increase the information focus:

> Yes, ladies and gentlemen, I'm here this evening to prove to you that we can do better in the fight against landmines.

No, no, we are not satisfied, and we will not be satisfied until justice rolls down like waters and righteousness like a mighty stream. (M. L. King, August 28, 1963)

And

"And" is a coordinating conjunction that takes on the function of a discourse marker in conversation. In public speaking, including political speeches, "and" is the most frequently used connective when both clause and sentence linkage are taken into account. If "and" is absent from the Gettysburg (due perhaps to the concision of the speech), it is used in all of Abraham Lincoln's other speeches, appearing at an average rate in about 10% of the clauses (slightly higher than that of "but": between 8% and 10%).

Interestingly, "and" is used at varying rates by the same speaker depending on the context. John F. Kennedy's inaugural address features "and" in 10% of its clauses, in contrast to his speech "We choose to go to the moon", where the rate is 30%. Similarly, the rate in Martin Luther King's speech "I have a dream" (5%) contrasts with that of his speech "I've been to the mountaintop", given the day before his assassination in 1968 (26%). "And" is not as frequent, never exceeding 10%, in particularly formal speeches of great solemnity associated with Rhetorical Staging (cf. Chap. 9).

Repeated use of "and", just like that of "so", produces a linear or additive syntax typical of conversation, where clauses are often strung together. This type of syntax does not place a high cognitive demand on addressees. When it appears at the beginning of a sentence in public address, "and" works as a discourse marker to bracket chunks of speech. It is used in transitions, and also to place focus on the sentence it introduces, which stands out and becomes as it were detached from both what precedes and what follows. Hence its frequency in the following keynote. The first part of this sequence is about the thickness of the product:

Now, having built in all of this stuff, one of the most startling things about the iPad 2 is it is dramatically thinner, not a little bit thinner, a third thinner, 33% thinner. That's what it looks like [points to slide show]. So if

you look at the numbers, when you look at the numbers, gone from 13.4 mm down to 8.8 mm thick, it's dramatic. *And* (1) for those of you that have iPhone 4s, the new iPad2 is actually thinner than your iPhone 4. (S. Jobs, keynote, iPad 2 launch, 2011)

The first instance of "and" places focus on the sentence it introduces. This sentence does not really introduce a new point—it simply reiterates how thin the new tablet is, by comparing it this time not with the previous tablet but with another product, the company's smartphone. However, "and" separates out this new sentence, which now seems to introduce a new point. The arguments appear to be multiplied, and the sales pitch is more persuasive. "So" and "and" feature in the two sentences that come next—followed by other instances of "and":

So we're incredibly happy with this. *And* (2) when you get your hands on one, it feels totally different. *And* (3) all these other tablets are coming out, most of them even thicker than the original iPad, nothing even approaching this. In addition to thinner, it's lighter as well, going from 1.5 pounds down to 1.3. *And* (4) you might not think that's a lot, but when you get down to 1.5 pounds, a tenth of a pound is a lot. *And* (5) uh it feels quite a bit lighter. (S. Jobs, keynote, iPad 2 launch, 2011)

Again, instance no. 2 of "and" introduces content that is not really new—it goes without saying that the feel of the product will be different if it is a lot thinner—but the coordinator gives the impression that this is a new point (particularly coming directly after "so" which, as will be discussed in the following chapter, signals the transition to a new point). Instance no. 3 functions in the same way, introducing content that simply embellishes on the same argument: that the product is very thin. Then a change of topic really does occur, with the argument moving from width to weight, and it is announced by the adverbial "in addition" associated with "as well". Further embellishments are provided by the sentences coming immediately after, introduced by "and" (no. 4 and 5), which again separates out the content and seems to present separate points. In the sequence that immediately follows, there is a move to the aesthetics of the product, where "and" really does coincide with a new topic:

And (6) it's got an all-new design. It's just beautiful. So this is what it looks like. It's really thin. *And* (7) it comes in two colours, black and white. We're going to be shipping white from day one. *And* (8) to give you some scale, this is what it looks like. Again, you can just pick this thing up, it almost floats. (S. Jobs, keynote, iPad 2 launch, 2011)

Instances no. 6 and 7 do coincide with new topics—those of design and colour, respectively—while instance no. 8 functions like the earlier ones, elaborating on a point already made beforehand, returning in fact to the argument of lightness, in a way that again suggests a completely new point.

As these examples demonstrate, "and" brackets and places focus on the content. It suggests an accumulation of arguments, and therefore proves a useful rhetorical device in the context of persuasion, such as that of a product launch. To guarantee this effect, it is necessary to mark a pause before "and", and also to stress it, pronouncing it with a full vowel (/æ/) as opposed to a reduced vowel (/ə/), as Steve Jobs did in this speech. In some cases, a pause is also marked just after "and". Pausing and sentence stress mark the status of "and" as a discourse marker. Pausing is not necessary in front of the adverbials "in addition" and "as well", for example.

Summary of functions of discursive markers in public address:

"Well" + evaluation
"Well" + response
"Well" = rules out pertinence of content of the previous sentence
"I mean" + justification
"You know" = renewed interest
"Yes"/"no" = reasoning in the here-and-now
"And" + change of topic/focalisation

Note

1. These figures were obtained from a corpus made up of political speeches, keynotes and TED talks.

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19

Introductions, Transitions and Signing Off

This chapter presents specific techniques at key moments of the speech: introductions, transitions and signing off, or ending a speech.

1   The Speech Opening and Speaker Ethos

Public speaking manuals often refer to three main objectives for speech openings:

– Introduce the topic—by adopting one of the strategies for attention-getters presented in Chap. 7 (e.g. storytelling, quotation and riddle);
– Give a preview of the organisation of your speech;
– Establish speaker ethos.

It is important to take time out at the very beginning of the speech to position yourself with respect to your audience, and build up a "speaking personality", or ethos (cf. Chap. 1). You need to establish credibility and demonstrate goodwill towards your audience, for example by adapting to them and to the specific speaking situation. According to one speechwriter,

the best thing is to express pleasure about speaking at the particular event, and then flatter your audience:

> The best and simplest way to open a speech is just to tell the audience that you are glad to be there. You may open with "I am pleased to have this opportunity", or "when [whoever] invited me to be your guest speaker, I was delighted", or just "I am very glad to be here tonight". Let the audience know that this is a good experience for you […] After you tell them how glad you are to see them, go on to tell them why: because they are good people and worth talking to. When addressing the chamber of commerce, mention the chamber's community role and good works. If you're addressing the bar association, try to find something nice to say about lawyers. Once you have shown the strange tribe that you are friendly and respect their totems, you may tell them what you're going to tell them, and get on with the job. (Matt Hughes—quoted in Smith 2017: 383)

An excellent example is provided by J. K. Rowling's commencement address delivered at Harvard in 2008. Rowling's introduction is "a speech about the speech". She adopts a common technique that consists in challenging her own competency and pertinence as speaker—which in fact serves to justify her place on stage. Self-deprecation is a characteristic of Anglo-Saxon culture, and is common in certain speech genres (it is, however, to be avoided in genres such as business presentations). Rowling begins by referring to the discomfort and stress she feels (and which is due to the asymmetrical relation between speaker and audience, cf. Chap. 4):

> The first thing I would like to say is 'thank you.' Not only has Harvard given me an extraordinary honour, but the weeks of fear and nausea I have endured at the thought of giving this commencement address have made me lose weight. A win-win situation! Now all I have to do is take deep breaths, squint at the red banners and convince myself that I am at the world's largest Gryffindor reunion. (J. K. Rowling, commencement address, Harvard, 2008)[1]

The expression of thanks is ironic in the context of the stress she has experienced (fear, nausea), which creates empathy with the audience. This is also a pretext for humour, and for slipping in a mention to the Harry Potter universe (cf. "the world's largest Gryffindor reunion")—a wink and

a nod to her area of expertise, which therefore justifies her presence on stage. She then goes on to talk about the genre of the commencement address itself:

> Delivering a commencement address is a great responsibility; or so I thought until I cast my mind back to my own graduation. The commencement speaker that day was the distinguished British philosopher Baroness Mary Warnock. Reflecting on her speech has helped me enormously in writing this one, because it turns out that I can't remember a single word she said. This liberating discovery enables me to proceed without any fear that I might inadvertently influence you to abandon promising careers in business, the law or politics for the giddy delights of becoming a gay wizard. You see, if all you remember in years to come is the 'gay wizard' joke, I've come out ahead of Baroness Mary Warnock. Achievable goals: the first step to self improvement.

After getting the audience to relate to her experience as speaker, Rowling demonstrates that she relates to the experience of the audience, by talking about a time when she was a member of an audience listening to a speech in a very similar context. This personal anecdote supposedly lessens the pressure she places on herself and the expectations the audience should have about her speech (cf. "a great responsibility; or so I thought"). In fact, she goes on to contradict herself (cf. "Actually") and insist on how much thought she has given to her own speech, which cannot be compared with the one she heard on her own graduation day:

> Actually, I have wracked my mind and heart for what I ought to say to you today. I have asked myself what I wish I had known at my own graduation, and what important lessons I have learned in the 21 years that have expired between that day and this.

By giving the "story behind the speech" (akin to what Bono does at the beginning of his TED talk—cf. Chap. 7), she sparks an interest in it. At the same time, because she is setting high(er) expectations for her own speech, she testifies that she is taking her role as speaker seriously and wants her speech to be beneficial to the audience—that is, so that they can take something away from it and remember it years later. This leads naturally on to a preview of the speech:

> I have come up with two answers. On this wonderful day when we are
> gathered together to celebrate your academic success, I have decided to talk
> to you about the benefits of failure. And as you stand on the threshold of
> what is sometimes called 'real life', I want to extol the crucial importance
> of imagination. These may seem quixotic or paradoxical choices, but please
> bear with me.

An organisation in two parts is announced: one about failure and the
other about imagination. Rowling's introduction illustrates how building
up empathy, establishing a non-condescending ethos, sparking an inter-
est in her speech and providing a preview can and should all be part of
the same movement.

2   How to Give a Preview of Your Speech

Rowling previews her speech by presenting the two points she plans to
develop as answers ("I have come up with two answers") to a question she
raises beforehand ("I have asked myself…"). Outside the very common
phrase "I would like to make several points today/this morning etc."—
where the temporal reference underlines a speech perfectly adapted to the
circumstances—a number of other devices can be used to preview a
speech. We will mention three here: metaphors, parallelisms and
numbering.

Metaphors

Steve Jobs begins his commencement address at Stanford with the meta-
phor of the story. His famous "three stories" preview (and structure)
his speech:

> Today I want to tell you three stories from my life. (S. Jobs, commence-
> ment address, Stanford)

Another common metaphor is that of the journey, or the walk (e.g. "I'd
like to take you on a journey"; "let's take a walk through…"; "I'd like to

walk you through several points"). These can be used to preview the whole speech, or to preview part of it within the speech:

> And I don't think it is an exaggeration to say that the software and hardware that has gone into this product is the most challenging our team has ever taken on, and what they've accomplished is simply amazing. *So let's walk through it. First,* iPhone 5 is the thinnest phone we have ever made. […] Volumetrically it is smaller *as well*. (P. Schiller, iPhone 5 launch, 2012)

Like storytelling, metaphor is an inherent component of public speaking. When a metaphor is used to preview a speech, it serves as a gentle reminder of the formality of the exercise. Speakers comply to this formality without referring to structure per se—which is a subtle way of subverting public address and packaging it as something that is more than talk and becomes an "experience".

Parallelisms

Another subtle but efficient way of previewing a speech is to present its different parts in successive parallel structures. The parallelism signals the fact that we are dealing with a series. Parallelism is, for example, created when the same grammatical subject is repeated, and is followed by a similar type of verb (e.g. "make", "give", "help"—all monosyllabic active, transitive verbs) in sentences of similar length:

> There are many benefits to practising yoga.
> *Yoga makes* your body more flexible, and helps to reduce those aches and pains.
> *Yoga gives* your brain with a workout and improves the connection between the body and the mind.
> *Yoga helps* to reduce stress levels, and provides you with a moment to switch off and take a break from the hassles of everyday life.

One variation organises points in chronological order, with parallelism created by temporal adverbials placed at the beginning of the sentence (e.g. "In 1984…"; "In 2001…"; "today…").

Numbering

The most common means for previewing the speech is via ordinal numbering, with ordinal adjectives ("first", "second", "third") or adverbs ("firstly", "secondly", "thirdly") placed at the beginning of successive sentences. Speakers generally announce the series before then breaking it down. Most numbering involves three points—according to the magic rule of three (cf. Chap. 16):

> Well, today, we're introducing *three revolutionary products of this class. The first one* is a widescreen iPod with touch controls. *The second* is a revolutionary mobile phone. And *the third* is a breakthrough Internet communications device. (S. Jobs, keynote, iPhone launch, 2007)

The preview in the following extract consists in a series signalled by a cardinal number ("one"), an adjective ("another") and an ordinal adjective ("third"). In addition, the series is announced by way of a question, which is repeated, and thoroughly prepares the audience for the preview to come:

> However, if you actually talk to people and even question yourself, and you ask yourself, *where do you really want to go when you really need to get something done* you'll find out that people don't say what businesses [companies] think they would say. If you ask people the question *where do you really need to go when you need to get something done* typically you get three different kinds of answers. *One* is kind of a place or a location or a room. *Another one* is a moving object and *a third* is a time. So here's some examples. (J. Fried, "Why work doesn't happen at work", TED talk)

Two examples of speech introductions are presented below. Both belong to an academic enclosing scene and illustrate the type of openings, including previewing, that is appropriate, for instance, for a student during a research viva or internship report viva.

Viva: Introduction no. 1

Members of the examination committee, good afternoon, and thank you for being here. Today, I'm going to present my dissertation, entitled "…." *First*, I'll give you some background about myself, about why this topic was so interesting for me, and why I chose to do this study. *I'll talk about* the purpose of this study, my research questions. *I'll very quickly drive you through* the literature review and then the methodology. *I'll then go over* some of the major findings, *and then talk about* implications of the study. *So I'm going to talk about* three years of my life in three hundred pages in thirty minutes.

Viva: Introduction no. 2

Members of the examination committee, thank you for accepting to be here this morning for the presentation of my Masters dissertation. My dissertation, entitled "Behind the Scenes at Monsato", takes a closer look at the recent marketing strategy of Monsato, the multinational agrochemical company. This company first drew my attention when I came across an article, back in 2012 published in the newspaper "Le Monde" entitled "Half a Century of Sanitary Scandals". That's when I learnt that some people call them the "Big Brother of agriculture", that they own 90% of the seeds in the world, and that they are heavily involved in government lobbying—and not just in the USA.

Now, in my research, I have deliberately put the issue of lobbying to one side. I plan to pursue a career in marketing, and so I wanted to concentrate on the company's marketing strategy. My main research question relates to how the company has fought back to save their image over the period of the past ten years. I have attempted to gauge whether their PR initiatives have been effective or have simply generated more controversy. To do this, I have categorized their different actions—for example, in sponsorship and donations—and have examined the reactions to these actions in media coverage and commentary.

In my presentation this morning, I'll start by quickly reminding you of a few landmarks in the history of the company. *I'll then go back over* my categorization of Monsato's main PR actions, *and present my analysis of the reactions* to these actions. *I will end by sharing with you* some personal reflections on my research. *I'll talk about* the problems I encountered, *and indicate further questions* that are raised by my findings.

Tool Box: Expressions to Provide a Preview of Your Speech:

I'm first going to talk about…then I'll turn to…and then I'll end with a discussion of…
I'll start by…. and then I'll go over…. Finally, I'll broach …
I will first focus on… I will then examine… And I will finish/conclude/end by…

I'd like to raise several questions/issues here this morning
This raises/several questions
There are several problems with such a hypothesis. (The first is…, the second is… etc.)
I'm going to focus on three aspects

I'm going to talk you though several aspects/points
Let's walk through several points

I'd like to leave you with three main ideas
I'd like to point out/discuss two/three aspects/sides to this issue

I'm going to approach this from three different angles

I'm going to tell you a story
Allow me to start with a little story
This morning, I'm going to take you on a journey…

3   Transitions

As noted previously, the structuring of speeches greatly depends on signalling at a local level. Regular signposting allows the audience to understand where the speaker is at with respect to the overall speech, and increases the pertinence of the part. Such signposting can be achieved via reference to an ordinal series (e.g. "The first/second/third cause of this problem is…"; "Now the second of my points is…"), or via a very general expression such as "Moving on now to…").

An effective transition involves two stages, where the content of the part that is coming to an end is summed up/reiterated, before announcing the topic of the next part. Systematic repetition of the point that has just been made before moving on to a new point is common practice in public speaking, and is a useful safeguard against cognitive overload. This is particularly well illustrated in keynotes. Below, the reiteration and the announcement are each realised via a nominal sentence, which make for a punchy transition:

> We think we've got a breakthrough in user interfaces to where it is now accessible to everybody to have a thousand songs and find them and navigate them faster than if you only had 10 or 15 on uh a much simpler device. *A big breakthrough, Apple's legendary ease of use supplied to a consumer electronic device.* Third breakthrough: Auto-Sync. (S. Jobs, keynote, iPod launch, 2001)

To sum up immediately preceding content, other general expressions can be used, for example "Let's pause/I'd like to pause for a moment to summarise…"; "In short…"; "Now that we have seen how…, let's move on to…". In addition, specialised uses of "so" and "now" can be noted.

A Specialised Use of *So*

Public speaking has developed a specialised use of "so" as a discourse marker to signal a discursive boundary: a "conclusive" "so" that introduces the reiteration of a point before moving onto the next one. Some keynotes make systematic use of this in almost every transition:

> *So*, this is what's so remarkable about iPod, it is ultraportable. *We don't stop there.* iPod has got Apple design. (S. Jobs, keynote, iPod launch, 2001)

So suggests a causal link that theoretically is not justified by such a context, but hence presents the progression from one point to the next as natural. It also creates an expectation and forewarns the audience that the speaker is about to move to a new point. The new point is often announced via an interrogative, which directly follows "so":

Over time I've collected *about a half-dozen methods that do work*, of course there are many more, that do work and that are effective. And *the first* is that the change that has to take place has to take place here, inside me. […] *So* that's fear. What about anger? […] *So that's the third one, anger.* (S. Elworthy, "Fighting violence with non-violence", TED talk)

Sometimes, this two-part movement is reduced to one part, where "so" directly introduces the question:

They realized that using force against force doesn't work. *So* what does work? Over time I've collected about a half-dozen methods that do work, of course there are many more that do work and that are effective. (S. Elworthy, "Fighting violence with non-violence", TED talk)

A Specialised Use of *Now*

Just like the interrogatives in the previous examples, "now" often pairs up with "so" to introduce the new point:

We are a personal computer company and this product is born to network, it is also a beautiful stand-alone product. We're targeting it also for education, they want to buy these, and it's perfect for most of the things they do in instruction, it's perfect for finding tremendous sources of information over the Internet, and we hope as you see the product, it will inspire us all to make even better products in the future. *So* we think iMac's going to be a really big deal. *Now*, what should it be? Well, we went out and we looked at all the other consumer products out there. (S. Jobs, keynote, iMac launch, 1998)

"Now" can function autonomously, without "so", to signal a new part/topic. In the following keynote, it announces a change on several levels, as we move to the demonstration of the product and, in this specific example, from the voice of the speaker to that of the machine:

You've just seen some pictures of Macintosh. Now I'd like to show you Macintosh in person. All the images you are about to see are generated in what's in that bag. *Now* we've done a lot of talking about Macintosh

recently but today for the first time ever I'd like to let Macintosh speak for itself [computer speaks]. (S. Jobs, Macintosh launch, 1984)

"Now" appears systematically in the 2011 iPad launch, almost every time Jobs moves on to a new feature of the product:

Now, having built in all of this stuff, one of the most startling things about the iPad 2 is it is dramatically thinner. […]
Now, in addition to having both colours, we also have models that work with both at&t and Verizon's 3G networking from day 1. […]
Now, here we are adding stuff into the iPad—uh, cameras, faster processors, and gyroscopes and all this other stuff, uh and we've made it way thinner, something's got to give, and uh you would think that we would have to give up some of the iPad legendary battery life. […]
Now, in addition to preserving the battery life, when we add all this stuff, we've also preserved the price. (S. Jobs, keynote, iPad2 launch, 2011)

Language Tool Kit for Transitions:

The first/second/third cause of this problem is…
Now the second of my points is…

Moving on now to…
Let's turn now to; Let's now move on to…
I'd now like to leave that and move on to
To move on to /moving on to my next point, …
Let's now turn to my last point…

The next slide shows…

Let's recap so far/To summarise so far
I'd like to go back over what I've just said
Let's pause/I'd like to pause for a moment to summarize…
So that's what I wanted to say on that point
So that basically sums up what I wanted to say regarding that aspect of the problem
In short, …

Now that we have seen how…, let's move on to…
So, now that we have seen/discussed, let's turn to…
So that's what can be said as regards…. Now, regarding/in terms of…

So, what can be said from a historical point of view?
So, what's happening in the financial sector?
So, how does it work?
Now, what are the prospects for 2020?
Now, I'd like to raise a separate question here
Now, I'd like you to share something else with you
Now, another crucial aspect of the problem is…

4   Leave-Taking: How to Announce the End of the Speech

Just as it is essential to provide a preview of your speech and to clearly indicate transitions throughout it, it is just as important to announce the moment when your speech is about to draw to a close. The ritual of leave-taking serves a pragmatic purpose: psychologically, we immediately increase our attention when we know that the speech is about to end. Like previewing, and in contrast to practices in some other cultures, expressions such as "to conclude" or "as a conclusion" are best avoided. The following list provides expressions that can be used in English instead.

Once this announcement is made, you will generally reiterate the main points of the speech before finishing "on a high"—that is, in a striking and even dramatic way that will be remembered afterwards. Strategies for "memorable statements" are the same as for the attention-getters introduced in Chap. 7.

Language Tool Kit, Leave-Taking:

And now to sum up briefly
I've wanted to share a number of things with you this morning
I'd like to leave you with a number of key ideas
We have seen how/that…

As I've explained today/this morning…
As we've seen in this presentation
Let's take a last look at the key issues/points I've made today
Before I take your questions, let's go back over my main message today

We've come to the end of our journey together today
Well, I'm coming to the end of my presentation
Right, this brings me to the end of my talk
This just about concludes/wraps up what I wanted to say
My presentation is drawing to an end
I am just about done

Note

1. Transcribed from video retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UibfDUPJAEU.

Reference

Smith, R. (2017). *Becoming a Public Relations Writer: Strategic Writing for Emerging and Establishing Media*. New York: Routledge.

Part IV

The New Oratory

As regularly noted throughout this book, the term "New Oratory" groups together the new public speaking genres that have developed from the beginning of this century, and that are directly dependent on the digital technologies through which they are disseminated, resulting in a generation of "digital speakers".[1] The New Oratory is inherently linked to "Generation Z": "From podcasts and vlogs to pop-up feminist salon nights where anyone can take the mike, Generation Z is developing new ways to speak, debate, argue and raise professional profiles."[2] The "new" in New Oratory highlights the new functions and meanings which, in light of the digital revolution, are now realised by oratory. Oratory—the "rationale and practice of persuasive public speaking", which encompasses both the composition and the delivery of speeches[3]—derives from the Latin verb *orare*, meaning "to speak" or "to plead". The sense of pleading a cause is important in the genres belonging to the New Oratory, where the aim is to get the audience to adhere to a product, an idea, a thought process, and so on—as well as to the legitimacy of a person placed in the role of speaker who is not necessarily an established public figure.[4]

Digital technology has transformed how we communicate and has altered the divide between written and spoken language. The electronic media (e.g. radio and television) of the twentieth century paved the way for new communication set-ups, resulting in forms of "second orality" (Ong 1982), indicative of a world where "we live with a sense of personal

presence which is a new and invigorating human experience" (ibid.). But the digital media have gone much further, with smartphones and smart-watches relaying forms of communication (text messaging, emails, blogs, Youtube, social networks, video conferencing etc.) that have completely blurred the distinction between written and spoken, between live and delayed transmission, and between real and virtual worlds. This has led to an implosion of the mass media, with a major shift between the individual and the collective, and to an "ever-more crowded world" (Donovan 2014: 5), where interaction is ever more immediate and brief.[5]

Significantly, the New Oratory presents a paradox. On the one hand, it is a product of the digital era. The new technologies are an integral part of the communication set-up, with it being largely disseminated by institutions and the speakers themselves via online video, to produce a two-tier audience (cf. Chap. 4) that includes Internet viewers. The reception process is also modified by the fact that the audience is able to photograph, tweet and livestream speeches as they sit watching the speech. And the speaker's delivery includes a near-compulsory technical accompaniment (slide show, prompters)—with the possibility too of reading not from a paper but from a tablet, a possibility taken up, for example, by Presiding Bishop Michael Curry (cf. Chap. 2). However, on the other hand, the New Oratory runs counter to the virtual and impersonalised modes of communication associated with the new technologies, and provides an example of spoken communication that is personal and embodied. In this respect, it suggests a certain resistance to the digital revolution. Taking, for instance, the case of the recruitment process in the professional world, robots may well scan applicants' CVs, but there comes a time when the recruiter has to meet the applicant and hear and see them speak to ascertain whether they are the right person for the job—and also whether they want to work with the person.

Unlike text messaging, blogs, video conferencing and most videos produced by Youtubers, the New Oratory is not uniquely digitally mediated and exists outside its digital dissemination. While it is based upon a two-tier audience structure, a compulsory ingredient of the communication set-up is the context of live delivery and the experience of the live audience. In this, the New Oratory is distinct from speeches broadcast on radio.

The following three chapters will each focus on an iconic genre belonging to the New Oratory. The final chapter of this book will address what

they have in common. Each genre will be examined using the analytical framework presented in Chap. 3, according to which all discourse is directed towards a specific audience in a specific context which therefore conditions the way it is "staged".

Notes

1. The phrase "digital speakers" is used in an article by Andy Hickman, "Conference Speakers and the Digital Revolution", published online on April 19, 2017: https://www.jla.co.uk/conference-speakers-digital-revolution/#.XFvzCc17lPb.
2. Hinsliff, G., "How to be Heard: The Art of Public Speaking", *The Guardian*, October 21, 2018 https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2018/oct/21/art-of-speaking-up-for-yourself.
3. *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (https://www.britannica.com/art/oratory-rhetoric). In ancient Greece and Rome, oratory was studied as a component of *rhetoric*, "the art of using words effectively" (Ibid.).
4. The phrase "the new oratory" (in lowercase) has appeared once before, in the American title of a 1970 public speaking manual originally published in Britain as "*Effective Presentation: The Communication of Ideas by Words and Visual Aids*", written by the British broadcaster Anthony Jay. The phrase "the new oratory" appears nowhere in the book itself. Interestingly, however, the book focuses on the visual accompaniment and targets the corporate world: the author wrote that presentation skills were a key competence lacking in managers back in the 1960s.
5. Hence the term "digital revolution", which is not used lightly here, to insist on the mammoth changes society is currently undergoing as a result of the advent of digital technology. These changes are occurring not only in the sector of communication per se, but in all areas of life—professional, social, leisure, and so on.

References

Donovan, J. (2014). *How to Deliver a TED Talk*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
Ong, W. (1982). *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word*. London: Methuen.

20

Three-Minute-Thesis Presentations (3MTs)

Three-minute-thesis presentations aim to provide research students with the opportunity to communicate with the general public about their research. Speeches are delivered during competitions organised in universities. The first competition was organised in 2008 by the University of Queensland in Australia, which made three-minute-thesis presentation, or "3MT", a registered trademark. The concept very quickly caught on. The first international competition was organised in 2010, and now more than 600 universities in more than 65 countries worldwide belong to the official "3MT" network and organise competitions for their PhD students. Added to these are other universities that organise under different names competitions which apply the same principle.[1] Competitions are organised by universities and bring together researchers irrespective of the discipline. The humanities are represented, but there are more 3MTs that belong to the "hard sciences". The 3MTs benefit from an extensive secondary audience of Internet viewers, as the majority of competitions are uploaded, either by the speakers themselves, but most often by the universities, which devote sections of their websites to them as part of their own self-promotion.

As a genre, the 3MT is located between several enclosing scenes, or communities of reference. It contrasts with other genres—for example,

the written version of the PhD, the oral PhD viva or the conference paper—in which academics *communicate with other academics belonging to the same discipline*. As we will see, the 3MT genre is conditioned by the fact that it targets what is qualified as a "non-specialist" audience and therefore negotiates between two communities of reference.

1   Defining the 3MT Generic Scene

Participants and Purpose

The 3MT brings into play a speaker who is a PhD student or recent PhD graduate and therefore belongs to the academic community, and an audience described as "non-specialist". Participants and purpose are intricately linked, as the challenge for speakers consists in adapting specialised content to cater to this non-specialist audience.

However, what is meant exactly by "non-specialist"? It can be assumed that what was originally meant by "non-specialist" does not equate with "non academic" but with "academics irrespective of the discipline". This concurs with the fact that competitions generally take place in an academic environment, on campus, in front of an audience partly (if not mostly) composed of fellow PhD students and individuals belonging to the academic world. Speakers are judged by juries that include fellow academics who do not necessarily belong to the field to which the 3MT relates.

Also, while strictly speaking the finality for the speaker/competitor is to win the competition, 3MTs serve to publicise young doctors' research and help them secure postdoctorate contracts and other jobs in the sector of research and development. Professionals working in this sector are among the secondary audience of Internet viewers and should not be forgotten among the target audience.

Time and Space, Including Staging

The duration of the speech gives the competition its name and, as such, is the main defining feature of the competition/genre. This time limit is non-negotiable: any speaker who exceeds three minutes is disqualified.

"Presenting concisely" appears in most definitions of the exercise, accompanied sometimes by the scientific metaphor of "distilling" ("distill" = "extract the essential meaning or most important aspects of").[2] Competitors are advised to leave out the detail and to "focus on the big picture". This runs counter to the general approach to PhD research, which aims to narrow down a research question to a very specific area of expertise.

In theory, 3MT competitions are open to anyone enrolled in a PhD irrespective of where they are at in their research, but most of the time, contestants have finished, or are in the final stage of completion of their PhD. Credibility is gained from this research which is already behind the speaker. In this, the 3MT is distinct from other speech genres, such as the investor pitch, which is solely about prospective action.

As regards spatial considerations, the 3MT is generally delivered, as already noted, within an academic environment. Most of the time, at least in Australia where the 3MT originated, competitions are held in classrooms where there is no elevated stage. Physically, the speaker is therefore on the same level as the audience and stands quite close to them.[3] This explains why speakers do not always use a microphone: most of the time, there is no microphone and, if one is used, it is discrete (e.g. a lapel microphone). The panel of judges is located either in the front row of the audience, or off to one side, in which case speakers tend to establish eye contact uniquely with the audience located in front of them (i.e. the official target audience of the speech). There is no pulpit, and the "stage area" is bare, albeit the screen behind the speakers upon which is projected their one unique slide.

Indeed, the third and last main requirement of the 3MT is that it includes a visual accompaniment, but in the form of one unique slide. The slide must be projected from the very beginning of the speech and throughout it. It is therefore an integral part of the speech, and needs to be part of the early planning stage. As will be illustrated below, the slide can serve as part of the attention-getter in the speech opening. Another requirement is that the slide be static and contain no animation or movement. In reality, the slide can be extremely simplistic: for instance, in a 3MT about the development of a computer program for autistic children, the slide projected by Selene Petit (2018 3MT Asia Pacific Final

runner-up) only contains the following message typed in white letters on a dark background:

> I am Lucy and I have so much to say. Amazingly, I was rescued from silence…. (Lucy, aged 5 years old)[4]

This said, the slide should serve as a backdrop to the performance and not as the main focal point. Just as the rules stipulate that no sound and video files are permitted, no props, laboratory equipment or costumes are allowed. Clearly, the aim is to avoid any distraction from the spoken word and to place the focus on the speakers themselves. Dress code varies, from semi-formal (suit but without a tie) to semi-casual (jeans, but with a shirt as opposed to a t-shirt). Stress is placed on aspects of delivery that make for a "polished performance", as indicated by another question in the list of official judging criteria: "Did the speaker have sufficient stage presence, eye contact and vocal range; maintain a steady pace, and have a confident stance?" Most of the time, the speaker remains stationary. Delivery can be more or less low-key, but is generally characterised by a slow vocal pace (unlike, for instance, the investor pitch), a smiling face and a number of facial expressions and hand gestures, which contribute to the tailoring of the speech to the non-specialist audience.

Organisation

The 3MTs are based on the following moves:

> <General + Specific [Question + Answer]>.

The 3MT echoes the PhD itself—and most academic research—which is honed down to one leading question. The aim of the research is to answer this leading question. However, unlike the PhD, in the 3MT, the <Question + Answer> movement substantiates the move to the specific, and is therefore embedded within the movement <General + Specific>. Indeed, the aim of a 3MT is to place the specific research question which has been carried out in a very narrow domain, within the "bigger picture", or wider landscape of general knowledge to which the non-specialist

audience can relate. This general picture needs to be given as of the speech opening, as part of the attention-getter. A return to the general picture characterises the ending of the speech. The overall organisation of the speech is therefore circular: the speech closes by underlining the importance and the potential of the research—a point backed up by advice given to competitors: "Try to leave the audience with an understanding of what you're doing, why it is important."[5]

Language Choices

Language choices are determined by the target audience: language must be "appropriate to a non-specialist audience". This means, for example, avoiding most academic jargon and acronyms. Technical terms and concepts are limited to what is absolutely necessary and/or can be understood by non-specialists—for example, those used in popular culture. In addition, speakers will pay particular attention to syntax and information flow in order to avoid cognitive overload when introducing new terms and explaining a problem or scientific procedure. Strategies relating to language are particularly developed in the following section.

2   Adapt to Your Audience

Outside the concrete constraints listed about (e.g. time limit and one slide), there is a preferential scenography for the 3MT that most speakers adopt and that can be explained by the need to adapt the speech to the audience. These strategies can be divided into two main categories: (i) adapt the content; (ii) engage with your audience.

Adapt the Content

PhDs pertain to a specialised sector of knowledge based on presuppositions which are not obvious to those outside the sector. The main challenge is to tailor the content without forsaking intellectual integrity or over-popularising it. At the same time, the aim is to spark in the audience genuine interest and enthusiasm.

You can adapt your specialised content via the following strategies:

– *Avoid detail:*

While PhDs focus on a narrow area within the specialised discipline, the aim of the 3MT is to present the core idea of your research within "the bigger picture". You need to have a clear idea of what this bigger picture is, and what you want your audience to take away with them after listening to you. Even after summing up the core of your message in one sentence, there is still the danger that you allow yourself during the presentation to get "bogged down" in the detail. For instance, it is not appropriate for you to refer to collections of data, dates, theories and so on and to describe all the stages of an experiment, and so on.

– *Identify content that is presupposed in your discipline:*

There will be a certain amount of content that is presupposed (i.e. goes without saying) within your discipline but will not be for a non-specialist audience. You need to identify this potentially problematic content so that you take the necessary time out to explain it. Avoid referring simply, for instance, to "Professor Y's theory of X".

– *Introduce a concept or a term in two stages:*

Adopt the strategy presented in Chap. 13 that consists in introducing a concept or a specialised term in two stages. For instance, the new term can be introduced at the end of a sentence and immediately repeated at the beginning of the following sentence in which it is then defined:

> This is the daily reality for people suffering from arrhythmia. Arrhythmia is a type of heart disease caused when the heart loses a regular rhythm.

In addition, you can prepare the audience for the specialised term by preceding its first mention with expressions such as "what is known as", before then defining it (e.g. "which…"):

Different theories have been proposed, but one of the most influential suggests that the constant switching between languages builds *what's known as* cognitive reserve, *which* makes our brains more resilient in the face of disease. (Maddie Long, "Language and the Brain: The Skye's the Limit", 2016 Edinburgh University winner)[6]

– *Use metaphor, analogies and examples:*

Technical terms and specialised content can be understood by using images and comparisons linked to everyday life to which the audience can relate. The following excerpt illustrates the use of analogy, with "cells" compared to "light bulbs", "receptors" to "electrical wiring", and "active sites" to "light switches", each of which is introduced by "like":

> The entire human body is made up of cells. These cells are *like* light bulbs, flashing on and off at different times in order for our bodies to function correctly. *For example*, the muscle cells in our legs flash when we are walking, cardiac cells within the heart flash on and off with every beat, and cells within the problem-solving regions of my brain were definitely flashing when I was trying to come up with a clever way to explain my research in just three minutes. The receptors on these cells are *like* electrical wiring, whilst the active sites present on receptors are *like* light switches. (Briana Davie, "*Understanding allosteric modulation of GPCRs*")[7]

This extract also includes *for example*, one of the most common connectives used in 3MTs which generally occurs at least once in any given speech.

Content is adapted in different ways in the following 3MT introduction. It begins by referring explicitly to the slide, which provides a visual representation of the subject:

> *The image on the top left corner is of* a sea squirt *which is in fact a marine anima*. This little creature has been around for 500 million years and *has more in common with us than you might think*. (Nilushi Karunaratne, "*Investigating Cannabinoid Receptor Interacting Protein CRIP1a as a novel therapeutic target*")[8]

The speaker begins with the non-specialist term ("sea squirt") before emphatically introducing the specialist term ("which is in fact a marine anima"). Importantly, the speaker does not forego the specialist term and is therefore able to navigate between the two communities of reference (non-specialist and specialist). She then takes her time to introduce other specialist knowledge, presented by way of analogy (introduced by "which is basically…"), or accompanied by an explanation ("This consists of"). Another technical term is signalled by the phrase "known as", and an important distinction is presented via existential "There are…":

> As with all animals, we have a nervous system *which is basically* the control system of the body. *This consists of* cells which pass signals or messages. These are passed onto receptors via chemicals *known as* neurotransmitters. What's really fascinating is that millions of years ago the sea squirt evolved to express a set of new receptors *known as* the cannabinoids receptors. And through evolution we've also come to have these receptors in our body. *There are* two receptors CB1 and CB2. CB1 is found highly expressed in the brain and is found in neurons that release the neurotransmitter glutamate and GABA.

This passage also exemplifies direct engagement with the audience: humans are compared to the animal under study, and both speaker and audience are directly included in this comparison via the use of "us" and "we" ("has more in common with us…"; "we have a nervous system"; "we've also come to…").

Engage with Your Audience

A priority of the official 3MT judging criteria is that of "engagement" (N.B. "engage" = "establish a meaningful contact or connection with"). In this, the 3MT is radically different from the written PhD and from all academic writing, where the norm is that no direct reference be made to the reader, and that the writer foster anonymity and objectivity. In the 3MT, the focus is placed on the very person of the speaker, who puts a human face—and body—on the research.

– *Deliver lively:*

The 3MT is a true performance: you not only need to look at your audience, but smile at them, and vary your facial expressions and hand gestures. In some winning 3MT speeches, the academic-cum-speaker is transformed into a real performer, moving about the stage and accompanying almost every sentence with a hand gesture. For instance, Yasmin Mustapha Kamil, winner of the 2018 3MT Asia Pacific Finals (cf. speech studied below), accompanies almost every sentence with a specific facial expression and/or hand gesture: when she says "three components", she holds up three fingers, and then holds up one, two and then three fingers to accompany "first", "second" and "third"; when she says "reduce", she gestures a lowering movement with one hand.

– *Use subjective and emotional language:*

Unlike in academic writing, subjective and emotional language is regularly exploited in 3MTs in order to trigger interest and engage the audience. The passage quoted at the end of the previous section contains two examples: the expression "what's *really fascinating*…" triggers interest, and "this *little* creature" triggers empathy. In addition, startling findings or information can be introduced by feigning surprise thanks to expressions such as "in fact" or "actually". The speaker below not only uses "actually", but acts out surprise by using the form of exclamation "oh":

> I have been gathering over two hundred hashtags over the past three months, that relate to the referendum, directly from Twitter, and *actually*, I have 2 million now and as I speak I am gathering about, *oh*, 500 more tweets. (Yin Yin Lu, "The Rhetoric of EU Referendum Hashtags", Oxford University, Social Sciences Division, 2016)[9]

– *Use humour:*

You can engage your audience by entertaining them thanks to humour. First-prize winner in a national competition, Damien Mathis, in a 3MT about the development of environmentally friendly building materials, made

his audience laugh by joking that his thesis aimed to "help ice melt faster in your mojito", and also made an amusing comparison with respect to his status as PhD student: "The sun never takes a holiday. It's like a PhD student."[10]

– *Refer to yourself:*

Because your role is to embody your research, you need to put yourself in the front line and refer to yourself explicitly. Demonstrate that you have been the key actor and decision-maker in the research process by using sentences beginning with "I" in the active voice to talk about what you have done, for example: "I decided to…"; "I carried out a number of experiments…"; "I have come up against a problem…" and so on. This is what the speaker does in the extract quoted just above when she says "I have been gathering over two hundred hashtags" (with use of the present perfect progressive tense insisting on the speaker's implication which has led to the conclusions being presented). You can also critique your research and refer to your expectations and hopes, as in the following example, where the expression of hope presents the speaker as modest and, therefore, empathetic to her audience:

> *What I hope to achieve is* a reliable, valid, cost-efficient, and acceptable OSCE which allows us to be confident in the competence of our graduates. I also hope that what students learn through our OSCEs will have positive flow-on effects. (Clare Walsh, "Competence Assessment in Australian Pharmacy Students")[11]

And you can also find a pretext to refer to your role as speaker. For instance, in the speech about sea squirts quoted previously: "Cells within the problem-solving regions of my brain were definitely flashing when I was trying to come up with a clever way to explain my research in just three minutes".

– *Involve your audience:*

The most efficient way to engage your audience is to stage an interaction with them, in particular at the very beginning of your speech. For instance, this speaker begins by inviting the audience to imagine

themselves as a particular person ("a 40-year-old, overweight woman") who is described in a specific situation:

> *Imagine you are* a 40-year-old, overweight woman, sitting watching television after a hard day at the office, *you* flick through the channels wanting to watch something decent only to find commercial breaks. To *your* amazement every commercial is focused on one thing: weight loss. Quotes such as "lose 10kgs in 10 weeks", "Set yourself free" and "Start losing weight today" have been stamped in your mind. (Souhiela Fakih, "Promoting Evidence-Based Weight Management Recommendations for Women Pharmacy Consumers")[12]

The audience then discovers that this person is a researcher (cf. "Being a researcher…"), and that the speaker is most probably talking about herself. The audience is placed in the shoes of the researcher (these opening lines contain seven references to the second person, *you/your*), before the two points of view are separated out by the greeting "Good morning and welcome…":

> *Being a researcher you* think of one thing: which of these products and programs are evidence-based, which product or program is going to give *you* the best result, and which health care professional can help *you* make that decision? Good morning everyone and welcome to my three minute thesis.

This beginning is typical of a 3MT: it starts with a general picture to which the audience can relate, before moving to the specific problem and the question addressed in the research.

– *Present your thought process in the form of a dialogue:*

The passage above also illustrates the technique of talking the audience through a thought process, namely that which (supposedly) led to the research in the first place. The speaker presents the thought process in the form of a dialogue (cf. Chap. 7), by borrowing in specific places forms used in dialogue such as the direct question "Why?" followed by the answer introduced by "because" ("Why? Because the bone marrow contains stem cells…"). Not only that, he also stages this thought process

visually: after saying "there must be a better way to help", he pauses dramatically, puts his hand under his chin and pretends to think.

Presenting a thought process via a series of questions and answers resembling dialogue makes for a lively, upbeat performance, and also engages the attention of the audience, due to the constant changes in mood (e.g. Wh-question, question tag and imperative form). This technique is used frequently in 3MTs. Here is an extract of a 3MT entitled "Language and the Brain" that reports on research which suggests that learning a language makes us more resilient to certain types of brain disease. The speaker bases the second part of her speech on a series of questions, some of which are addressed hypothetically to the audience:

> Now as fascinating as these findings are, what about those of us who didn't grow up with another language? That's where my research comes in. […]
> Now I know what you're thinking: it [significant improvement in attention] could happen after any type of stimulating course, right? Not quite. […]
> You know the saying "you can't teach an old dog new tricks?" We can put that to rest. […]
> Now you might be thinking with such swift improvements, won't the results disappear just as quickly? Well, that depends. (Maddie Long, "Language and the Brain; The Skye's the Limit", 2016 Edinburgh University winner)

A pattern is formed by a question (generally introduced by "now") which is followed up immediately by an answer in a very short sentence that creates a contrapuntal rhythm (note also the use of "well" to introduce the response in the last example).

Let us examine a final speech opening, which begins with the speaker adopting the point of view of her (non-specialist) audience to denigrate (albeit ironically) the subject of her speech with much subjectivity ("dry and boring"). The aim is clearly to create empathy:

> Now you are probably looking at my project title and thinking, "Julia, what is so interesting about dose administration aids (DAAs)? Isn't it a bit dry and boring to be investigating the blister packs and sachets that organise medicines and assist in medicine administration at aged care facilities?"

(Julia Gilmartin, "*A review of dose administration aids: Improving medicine management*", 2011 winner, Monash University, 2011)[13]

Here, the speaker acts out an imagined dialogue that she places in the mouth of the audience which contains typical forms of interaction such as direct questions and a term of address ("Julia"). She then switches to her own viewpoint:

> *Well, I'd like you to think about a few things*. Australia's population is ageing. Reports have shown the number of those over 85 are going to more than quadruple in the next 40 years, and aged care facility populations are on the rise. *Unsurprising* with this ageing population. *With this in mind it's likely each one of you knows someone* in an aged-care facility. And it is *unsurprising* to know that a key factor maintaining their health are their medicines which are commonly supplied by pharmacists in DAAs.

The discourse marker "well" simulates on-the-spot reflection (cf. Chap. 18); the speaker invites the audience to engage in their own thinking process, gives them some facts to think about and gives her own reaction ("unsurprising") to these facts that is designed to echo the audience's reaction.

3   An Example of a Winning 3MT

These different strategies are exemplified in Yasmin Mustapha Kamil's winning speech at the 2018 3MT Asia Pacific Finals, whose delivery was referred to earlier. She begins her speech directly with a question for her audience:

> Have you ever been bitten by mosquitoes? Literally, they suck. And then they bite, they make us itch, but more than that, they transmit deadly diseases across the globe, including dengue. In a year, 390 million people fall victim to dengue. That's like 16 times the population of Australia today. And 70% of deaths caused by the virus are due to one reason: a delay in detection.[14]

The question is followed up with a series of short clauses which create an upbeat rhythm that launches the speech and which list the effects of

mosquito bites, the last of which is the object of the research: the disease dengue. After this attention-getter, the speaker then turns to the "big picture", by quoting a statistic. This statistic is recontextualised and made relevant to the audience thanks to an analogy ("That's like 16 times the population of Australia today"). The problem tackled by the research is then identified, and is strung out over a sentence in two parts, with "one reason" preparing the audience for the content to come ("a delay in detection") (compare with: "And 70% of deaths caused by the virus are due to a delay in detection"). The speaker marks a pause between the two parts, at the place of the colon.

Before reiterating on this problem, the speaker turns to a long development in which she describes how she herself has been a victim of the disease dengue. She then returns to the problem announced previously and elaborates on it ("the worst part was having to witness other victims in my ward succumb to dengue, just because they were not treated in time"). She presents herself not only as a ("lucky") survivor of the disease, but as a first-hand witness to victims who did not survive it, and it is her personal reaction to this which she cites as the key motivation of her research: "I felt that nobody should die from something as trivial as a mosquito bite, right?" The tag-like ending to this sentence, which turns it into the question, seeks the empathy and the approval of the audience, and marks the move away from this moment of personal storytelling and back to the general problem. This introduction contains the first three components of the organisation pattern of 3MTs, that is, <General + Specific [Question + Answer]>, and announces the transition to the fourth component ("finding a solution"), to which the speaker now turns:

> What I developed is a dengue sensor, which is able to detect the virus more accurately, and in a much shorter time. *Meet my* dengue detective. It holds three basic components: light, antibodies, and a tapered optical fibre which has not been used before. And all it needs from a patient is one tiny drop of blood. *Now let me tell you* how it works. *Envision* an underway glass tunnel—*you know*, the ones you walk through at aquatic exhibitions, with sharks and stingrays swimming all around you? *Well now visualise* this tapered optical fibre as that glass tunnel—immersed in that patient's blood sample. And on the surface of this glass tunnel, I immobilised antibodies

to capture the virus. Next, I transmit light, to travel through this fibre tunnel, and indicate the presence and quantity of the virus—and voilà!—dengue is detected and quantified.

This passage contains a number of interactive forms of language (in italics), notably the imperative and discourse markers ("now", "you know", "well"), as well as a sentence pronounced with a rising intonation which simulates a question ("you know, the ones you walk through at aquatic exhibitions, with sharks, stingrays swimming all around you?"). The speaker introduces the result of her research in two stages, via a *wh*-cleft ("what I developed is a dengue sensor", which she then dramatically reintroduces through personalisation ("meet my dengue detective"). The speaker invites the audience to visualise the procedure, drawing an analogy between the device and "an underway glass tunnel" in an aquarium. She talks to the audience through the test that she has devised and presents herself as a key actor, with "I" in subject position as agent of material processes ("I immobilised", "I transmit"). She theatrically signs off the imagined demonstration with a borrowing from the French—"and viola!"—ending with a pairing ("detected and quantified") which, like the other accumulations of the passage (e.g. "three basic components…"; "sharks and stingrays"…), contributes to the rhythm that is exploited during the performance.

The 3MT concludes by insisting on the importance of the research:

This dengue detector holds great promise. Now let me tell you why. First, it is highly sensitive and reliable. Second, it is affordable for all clinics to use. Lastly, and most importantly, it is able to reduce the detection time, from four days to just 15 minutes, which give dengue victims a greater chance to survive. This technology is a huge step forward in the future of dengue diagnostics. Mosquitoes will still suck, but this sensor will detect the virus in time, case closed. Thank you.

The importance of the research is presented in several stages: the announcement of "great promise" combines with the interactive form "Now let me tell you why" and a list of arguments organised in an ordinal series ("first", "second", "lastly"). The importance is reiterated ("This technology is a huge step forward…") before returning, according to a

circular macro-organisation, to the theme of the beginning, with the soundbite—"mosquitoes will still suck", and the concise and assertive formula "case closed".

This speech combines all the necessary ingredients of a 3MT. The speaker delivers in both a poised and lively way an upbeat script: for instance, clauses are short and are joined by a limited number of "oral" connectives ("and", "but", "so" and "now"). The content is packaged for a non-specialist audience so that it does not place them in cognitive overload: information is strung out and presented in stages and/or repeated, in combination with use of signposts, analogies and visualisation. But the main appeal of this speech is that the speaker succeeds in relating the topic to the audience and to the "bigger picture" and, above all, the way she draws on her personal experience and her narrow escape from the disease, which guarantees speaker credibility and construes a high level of engagement.

4   Language Tool Kit

Attention-Getter:

Imagine if … (e.g. we could take cells and make them…)
What if I told you that (+ startling fact +)! Good morning everyone and welcome to my three minute thesis
The image on the top left corner is of… (begin directly by referring to the visual)

Referring Explicitly to Your Research:

… And this is what I wanted to explore in my research
…Well my project/research aims to…
…So I wanted to find out more about this
…I'm interested in… and my research is about…
That's where my research comes in. My PhD aims to…
And that's where I come into play
So over the past three years, I have thought about this question

The problem is that we don't really understand…/ But the question is…
And so to get to the root of this problem I…/ And so to answer this question I investigated…

Talking About Stages of Your Research:

My hypothesis coming into this was…
So what has my research involved?/ What have I been doing exactly? … I have been gathering …/ investigating such things as…
To test this, I carried out a series of tests … with the aim of learning how to…
In the lab I re-created a similar situation…
Let's take a look inside the lab/let's take a closer look at what I do in the lab

Talking About the Results of Your Research:

So, these results beg the following question (e.g. why do patients react so differently?)
My findings show that…
So it turns out that…
So what does that mean?
I've been able to… (N.B. use of present perfect tense in English)
An exciting discovery is that…
For example/ for instance…
And what is most exciting is that I've shown that…
I was surprised to find…
What is most interesting is that…

Signing Off by Underlining Importance of Research— Often in Combination with the Expression of Excitement and Hope:

This is just an example/ one way we can apply my research
I am hopeful this work will provide evidence for…
I'd like to think this research can make the difference

These exciting new results are opening the doors to…
And as for the ultimate goal…
And can you imagine if one day we take this knowledge…
This could have a huge impact on our lives

Notes

1. Even though "3MT" is a registered trademark, for the sake of convenience, it will be used here to refer to the speech genre in general.
2. *Oxford Dictionary*.
3. An exception to this is provided by the staging of certain finals, which take place on an elevated stage.
4. Viewed at: https://vimeo.com/292832535.
5. https://threeminutethesis.uq.edu.au/resources/3mt-competitor-guide.
6. Transcribed from video retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lraTf8UPcUY.
7. https://www.monash.edu/pharm/research/news/three-minute-thesis/transcripts.
8. Transcribed from video retrieved from https://www.monash.edu/pharm/research/news/three-minute-thesis.
9. Transcribed from video retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=182&v=uPvl2ZtWxWc.
10. Video retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kOTFnidHOXc.
11. https://www.monash.edu/pharm/research/news/three-minute-thesis/transcripts.
12. https://www.monash.edu/pharm/research/news/three-minute-thesis/transcripts.
13. Transcribed from video retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4bxUg_rjq9w.
14. This extract and further extracts transcribed from video retrieved from https://vimeo.com/292832662.

21

Investor Pitches

A pitch is "a form of words used when trying to persuade someone to buy or accept something".[1] There are many types of pitches: the "personal pitch" or "recruitment pitch" that is part of the job interview process; the "elevator pitch", which is a variation on the personal pitch in which the speaker explains what he/she does in less than a minute (e.g. to the proverbial someone encountered in the elevator); the promotional pitch, designed to sell a product or service; the investor pitch, used to secure investment; and other more general sales pitches given to sell projects of various types.

Originally, pitching genres were located uniquely within the enclosing scene of the business world. Actors belonging to the business world constituted the community of reference, and the impetus on "selling something" was part of the underlying ideology. However, pitches are now an essential part of the professional world at large (e.g. the personal pitches of job interviews), into which such an ideology has extended.

The different types of pitches listed above have much in common, but we will concentrate here on the investor pitch, which is particularly synonymous with the digital age.

1   Defining the Investor Pitch Generic Scene

Purpose and Participants

The investor pitch brings together entrepreneurs, or budding entrepreneurs, who present their business plan in order to convince investors to finance their project. The investor pitch is located within the enclosing scene of the business world, and more specifically that of entrepreneurship. It is a subcategory of the "entrepreneurial pitch", which is defined as a pitch "that is given by a businessperson who is looking for venture capital from investors, or sometimes just business partners, with the intent to develop or promote a tangible or intangible product" (Clark 2008: 258).

Investor pitches are a product of twenty-first century start-up culture; they are iconic of the shift that has taken place in business, where activity is no longer based only on industry but on Internet-related services (cf. "intangible products"). The new entrepreneurs are developers who come from the worlds of computing, engineering, research and development. These worlds have become the main community of reference for the investor pitch as we now know it, and with them the "start-up ethos" of the young, friendly, casual and highly inventive entrepreneur.

Just like the 3MT, investor pitches are now delivered as part of competitions in front of a panel of investors, and the "winning" pitches (the number is flexible and depends on the competition) are granted financing from investors. Typical examples are competitions that take place during "Start-up weekends" (the first of which took place in the US in 2007). These bring together developers and actors from the business sector, who form teams to launch start-up companies. The weekend begins with one-minute pitches of a business idea designed to recruit team members, and ends with the investor pitches delivered by a spokesperson from each team, in front of the jury of investors and an audience of fellow contestants and participants of the weekend. Start-up weekends can target the high-tech world in general or focus on a specific sector and, therefore, a specialised community of reference (e.g. banking, insurance, leisure).

Investor pitches are also the subject of reality TV programs. The first in the Anglo-Saxon world was the British, BBC-produced "Dragons' Den", which first aired in 2005, and was based on the format of a Japanese program. Equivalent formats have now been aired in more than 30 countries. Titles of the programs feature names of creatures or animals (e.g. dragons, sharks, tigers) which refer to the investors and present them as predators with respect to the entrepreneur/contestant. The pitches are delivered in a television studio in front of a panel of investors, and the television viewers make up the secondary audience. A live audience is rarely present in the studio. These reality TV investor pitches will be discussed briefly at the end of this chapter.

Televised investor pitches are distinct from developer pitches in terms of the nature of the product on offer. While, according to the start-up model, developers pitch non-tangible products (i.e. Internet services), pitches to the "dragons" and "sharks" also include tangible products, which in fact far outnumber non-tangible ones. Like all reality TV, television viewers need to be able to relate to participants: generally, the speakers do not come from a business or engineering school background; they include stay-at-home parents, people in search of a career change, couples going into business together, sometimes with their children, as well as self-made business people who want to take their business to another level.

Whatever the context, the investor pitch, as its name suggests, primarily targets the panel of investors (unlike, for example, the 3MT, which primarily targets a non-specialist audience). The pitch plays a crucial role and serves as the gateway for the speaker-cum-would-be-entrepreneur and his/her team into the business community. And gaining entry into this community depends directly on the speaker's ability to convince the investors that they deserve to be part of it. Speakers speak on behalf of a team and, as will be discussed further below, it is essential to insist on the idea of belonging to a team, that the project is the result of a group effort, and so on.

The investor pitch is followed by a question time between the investors and the speaker and his/her team members. This can prove a decisive moment, when, for example, entrepreneurs and investors negotiate the exact terms of the investment. This part will not be addressed directly in this chapter. However, we should keep in mind that the investor pitch,

unlike a 3MT or a TED talk, therefore serves as a conversation-opener: it does not have to provide all the information of the business plan, which can be left for the discussion. Like the 3MT, speakers should not get caught up in the detail, but should focus on sparking the enthusiasm and the curiosity of the investors so that they want to find out more.

Time and Place, Including Staging

We will focus here on developer investor pitches of the kind delivered at *the end* of start-up weekends. Depending on the competition, these have a time limit of between two and five minutes. Unlike the 3MT, whose content is based on past action, developer investor pitches are oriented towards future action: "when you are pitching to someone, you are asking them to judge the future" (Bayley and Mavity 2008: 19). The pitch comes before the implementation of the project for which it is a condition. Just like pitching a ball at someone during a cricket or a baseball match, a verbal pitch is designed to spark an *immediate* reaction from another party.

This temporality determines two specific aspects of the genre. First, developers cannot generally rely on past action as a gauge of their credibility, and so credibility rests almost entirely on the way it is construed within the speech itself. And secondly, compared to other public speaking genres, the relationship between the speaker and the main target audience come to resemble a confrontation (hence the predicator-like image of the investors exploited in the reality TV programs). This makes it one of the most fast-paced, upbeat formats among the present-day public speaking repertoire.

These competitions generally take place on the premises of business and engineering schools, or at start-up hubs, in a room or a lecture theatre where, just like for the 3MT, the speaker does not generally stand on a high stage but at the same level and in quite close proximity to the audience. Again, there is no pulpit and no microphone (or a discrete one), and the speaker's body is in full view. However, unlike the staging of the 3MT, the jury is always positioned directly in front of the speaker, and the speaker looks directly at the jury, rather than at the rest of the

audience, which increases the impression of a face-to-face confrontation between speaker and panel of investors.

The investor pitch is always accompanied by a slide presentation, which contains between six and ten slides. Unlike the 3MT, the slides are not systematically integrated into the verbal content: except for projected online demonstrations of the product, the speaker does not generally point to the screen or refer explicitly to the content of the slide.

Dress code is predominantly casual—more than that of the 3MT, for example. Speakers occasionally wear a suit (without tie), but jeans and t-shirts are more common, in keeping with start-up entrepreneurial ethos. Delivery style is animated, but more sober compared to what can be found in the context of 3MTs: there is not the same impetus on performance: for instance, hand gestures are more limited, voice speed is generally faster and dramatic pauses are rare.

Organisation

Like all sales pitches (with the exception of the personal pitch), the investor pitch is based on a need–fulfilment format. This format is a variation on the problem–solution format that lies at the basis of all strategies of persuasion. Studies of human behaviour stress the fact that humans are resistant to change: therefore, any individual who wants to persuade another to change their behaviour or their opinion, including buying a new product or committing to a new project, must start by first explaining what is wrong with the status quo. Investor pitches therefore begin by construing a need that will be fulfilled thanks to the product or service on offer. This is the most essential part of the pitch: depending on the competition, it can take up to one-third or even half of the duration of the speech.

After this stage, the pitch moves to the fulfilment part and to the presentation of the product or service that the company plans to develop. This can include a demonstration stage, where the speaker either walks the audience visually through the use of the product or service or, in the case of an online platform that has already been developed, provides a demonstration as part of the slideshow.

Then comes the presentation of the business model. This move will be more or less developed depending on the length of the pitch and the type of competition (e.g. a competition irrespective of sector or targeting a specialised sector). This is followed by the request for capital, which includes the return on investment.

These moves are framed at the beginning and at the end of the speech by an identification of the company. The pitch always begins with the speaker introducing himself/herself and the company by name. This is repeated at the end, sometimes in a slightly varied form, like a signature to sign off the pitch, and can be accompanied by a one-liner, a potential slogan for the company that sums up its ethos, which is backed up by the company logo on the slide.

The organisation is summed up according to the following six moves[2]:

1. *Identification*: Who are you?
2. *Need*: What need are you fulfilling?
3. *Fulfilment*: How will you fulfil the need? What is unique to your approach? (+ demonstration)
4. *Business model*: How will you make money? Which customers will be targeted and how will you reach them? What is your competition? How do you plan to expand the business?
5. *Request for capital*: How much money do you need? What will be the return on investment? What will it be used for? Is there capital from other sources?
6. *Signature signing off*: Who are you?

Language Choices

The investor pitch generally combines informal language with a fast-paced syntax. While the aim of the 3MT is, for example, to adapt special-ised terminology to a non-specialist audience, the would-be entrepreneur needs to convince investors by using language to construe a need that reveals a business opportunity. Financial details need to be referred to elegantly, and the entrepreneur needs to appear friendly and relatively casual, in keeping with start-up entrepreneurial ethos.

2   Convince Your Investor

You will convince your potential investor if you accomplish the following two tasks:

1. Construe the need that leads to the business opportunity;
2. Construe an ethos of credibility as an entrepreneur.

Construe the Need

The first priority of your pitch is to construct from scratch a new need that will open up a business opportunity. Your investors will be convinced if they can imagine themselves wanting to buy the product or service themselves. And so, you need to pitch to your investors as if they were potential clients. In the following pitch, the speaker does this via two questions as part of a dialogue that he stages with the audience:

> Hello everyone, how many of you guys are using your email to collaborate with people outside of your organization? And how many think that's really efficient? Exactly.[3]

The premise is that the audience will in the majority answer "yes" or raise their hands to the first question, and answer "no" to the second question. The speaker follows this up with a one-word reaction ("exactly"), and, so, within a fast-paced syntax (i.e. simple, relatively short clauses, with little subordination—cf. Chap. 12) over three sentences, he has concisely and convincingly made the case that there is a problem in need of a solution. He then immediately follows this up with the solution, in the extract quoted in Chap. 8:

> We've built a web-based work platform that organizes work across people and across organisations, because we believe that is where work is heading. We also believe that each organisation has a unique way of doing things, so we've just built the platform on which you build the functionality and the applications. Whether it's for organizing a meeting, events, sharing your tasks or fixing your box, you get a tool that works like you, not the con-

trary. We want to become your platform for work like Facebook is for your social life.

The following pitch plays on the fact that the audience expects to be treated as a potential client. It makes a distinction between the audience (addressed as "you" here) and the target audience, based on the difference in gender that lies at the heart of the business project:

> Let's face it, sometimes men just don't understand women, and that's OK, we don't expect you to all the time, but it would be nice if a male who is developing an iPhone app for us understood us better. 10 million female iPhone users have repeatedly shown interest in the app market but there are two problems here: one, not a lot of apps exist for women, and, two, the apps that do exist kind of fall short of the mark, and that's mainly because men are developing them. (Katie Sunday, University of Dayton winning pitch, 2010)[4]

The (female) speaker deftly plays on the gender difference and manages to smooth it over so that the (presumably male) investors do not take offence. This is accomplished thanks to the concessive ("Let's face it") and the reassurance ("and that's OK"). She then moves on to construe the need, again smoothing it over thanks to a hypothetical wish ("it would be nice if a male…"). The audience is given no time to reflect on these potentially provoking remarks as the speaker follows up with a precise figure to quantify the market ("10 million female iPhone users"), hence announcing the market opportunity. A logical reasoning process is staged by the use of cardinal numbers as signposts ("one…"; "two…"), with the speaker careful to soften her criticism via the down-toner "sort of". And so, the need has been construed via a combination of data, logical reasoning and playful irony. The audience is therefore ready to hear the case for the service on offer:

> So our team, we believe that we can connect with this dissatisfied and under-targeted market, to bring very tailored apps, specifically for women.

The words "this dissatisfied and under-targeted market" reiterate the need and, with it, the business opportunity.

Alternatively, speakers can opt for an extensive episode of storytelling. This is illustrated by the following pitch prepared as part of a sales pitch class in an engineering school. The speaker stages a personal story, and then at one point, after effective use of anaphora (cf. Chap. 16) ("Having a cup of coffee shouldn't be all about…"), the pronoun "I" is replaced by a generic "you" ("all that should matter when *you* are having a coffee is *your* coffee…"):

> I was in my favourite bar the other day, just casually waiting for the waiter so that I could order my coffee. But I had to wait and wait. And in the end, I got really exasperated. After all, I thought, where is the pleasure in this? Having a cup of coffee shouldn't be all about ordering it. Having a cup of coffee shouldn't be all about waiting for it. And then, when you finally get it, having a cup of coffee shouldn't be all about trying to pay for it. No, all that should matter when you are having a coffee is your coffee and the people you are sharing it with.

The speaker construes the need while at the same time staging the thought process that (supposedly) led him to this business idea:

> And so all of a sudden it hit me. I looked around, and guess what? On almost every single table at that bar that day, including mine, you could see at least one smartphone. And so I thought: if I can use my smartphone to check the weather in Tokyo or the stock exchange market in Sao Paolo while I am waiting to order my coffee, I should be able to use it to order my coffee. And so, with a few friends, I have developed an app that will allow us to enjoy our coffees, our drinks, and our meals far more than before.

Construe an Ethos of Credibility

As entrepreneur and investor David Rose underlines, investors are not only investing in a project but in the people behind the project.[5] But, as stated earlier, because the investor pitch is about future action, speaker credibility depends uniquely on its construction through the speech itself. An ethos of credibility is construed via a number of means, which

do not only involve logical argument. Because the pitch is about the future, the investor's judgement is not only based on logic, but on "emotional factors", such as "trust", "confidence", "hope", "ambition" and "desire" (Bayley and Mavity 2008: 19). But how to achieve these? Studies have shown that they are inferred by investors thanks to an assertive delivery style and clarity of content (Clark 2008).

– *Delivery style:*
Delivery style needs to show commitment and passion: "what investors really want to feel and see during your pitch is natural, unwavering passion for what you are doing".[6] At the same time, you need to foster a friendly and relatively casual, "cool" style ("cool" is a word that appears regularly in blogs on investor pitches).

– *Display competency:*
You also need to display competency and knowledge as regards the technology behind the product or service, as well as the market. Knowledge of the market is to be backed up by data, as illustrated in the "MissApp" pitch quoted above. The same pitch exemplifies another essential strategy: presenting a thought process logically, simply by using, for example, signposts in the form of cardinal or ordinal numbers, which creates the impression that you master the facts—and that the facts speak for themselves. Similarly, it is essential to have done the homework regarding competition. This information does not necessarily need to appear in the pitch itself, but should be at hand for the discussion part, where competition is one of the main topics raised in the questions asked by the investors.

– *Sum up the figures elegantly:*
Because of the time limit, and the difficulty of presenting figures orally, you need to be able to script the necessary figures into your speech concisely and elegantly, without compromising a fast-paced syntax (i.e. simple, fairly short clauses). In the Miss App pitch, for instance, the request for money is introduced via an active verb with "we" as agent (e.g. "we're seeking"), and is part of a ternary series of sentences that each begin with

"we" and combine technical terms ("equity"; "return", "break-even") with colloquial language ("roll out" = produce):

> We're seeking a 100 000 dollar investment in exchange for a 25% stake in equity and a 10-X return. We'll roll out one app quarterly starting from six months from the initial investment. We expect break-even to occur by the end of year one.

Similarly, verbs in the active voice associated with "we" facilitate other parts of the pitch that contain technical terms.

– *Include a one-liner:*

Investors look for a one-liner that sums up your vision. A one-liner provides a strong form of assertion and as such increases your credibility. The Miss App pitch ends with the following line, which conforms to the characteristics of one-liners presented in Chap. 14 (e.g. concision);

> We're "Miss App", we're designing for women, and it's because, well, women like technology too.

This sentence is composed of three short clauses that produce a ternary rhythm and plays on the discursive marker "well" to suggest an on-the-spot reasoning process; this allows the speaker to get away with the potentially provocative, ironic last clause, presented as if it were not premeditated.

– *Convey a collective ethos:*

Speakers delivering investor pitches are not speaking uniquely in their own right, but as spokesperson for a team. As such, they need to construe a collective ethos and demonstrate personal commitment as leader of a team project. Developer investor pitches favour a collective voice over and above an individual one, and stand out as one of the few contemporary speech genres to contain a low frequency of the first-person singular pronoun "I", preferring instead the plural "we".

Collective ethos is conveyed as of the pitch opening, by identifying yourself by name and then immediately giving the name of your company:

Good afternoon. I'm Candace Klein and I'm with SoMoLend, and SoMoLend stands for Social Mobile Local Lending.[7]

If a choice between the two has to be made, it is the company that is named:

Hi. We're Yext, and for the last 3 years, we've been quietly revolutionizing the local advertising business.[8]

Investors seek reassurance that the team works well together. This is constructed via the repetition of "we" in combination with active verbs (e.g. "We conducted a survey…"; "What we're offering is…"). Such a collaborative effort is motivated by a system of values, hence the combination of the pronoun "we" with the verb "believe" that is recurrent in investor pitches (e.g. the MissApp pitch: "our team, we believe…").

3   Language Tool Kit

Identification:

Hi, we're [name of company]
Hello, my name is…, my company is… and my product is …
Good afternoon. We are team….and we are here to make your life easier by…

Attention-Getter/Introducing the Need:

How many of you guys have problems with…?
What if I told you (+ startling fact—e.g. I can save one million lives a year?)
Imagine what you could do if…
Guess what? Today, I'm going to show you how you can save ten thousand dollars a month.
I was in my favourite café the other day when all of a sudden it hit me (personal story)
Our team, we believe that…

Introducing the Solution/Product:

So what is the solution?/The solution to this problem is…
We intend to solve this huge problem by…
What is needed is…
So what are we offering?
We decided we had to do something
There are two main problems that we solve
We've created an app
We invented [name of product] because we got fed up/frustrated/angry
Our team, we think different/we think outside the box, and we are offering …
So, our team, we believe that we can connect with this dissatisfied and under-targeted market…
We've built/ designed…/ we're offering…
Our product/service boasts (+ list of features)

Developing Your Argument:

Our job is to/is going to be to…
It turns out that…
This means that…
Ok, now for the science bit
From a user perspective, you get a…
So the theme behind our technology is to…
So who is our market?/We are targeting…

Referring to Competition:

We've done some user validation
We've had positive feedback
We've done market analysis. Our first target is…
You may think this a crowded market/space, but we are very different from the others…

Introducing the Demo:

> Let me show you how it works
> So how does it work? Let's go to the demo

Requesting the Financing:

> We're seeking/asking for (+ amount of money—e.g. a 100-thousand dollar investment) in exchange for (e.g. 30% equity)
> Our company is on the threshold of an immense breakthrough/revolution, and we need your help
> We expect to become profitable/break-even by (e.g. the end of year one)

Signing Off:

> We are (+name of company), our product is (+name of product) and we are here to (e.g. make personal banking easier)

Notes

1. *Oxford Dictionary.*
2. This format is reproduced with further subparts in what is now known as the "pitch deck". The pitch deck is a slide presentation composed of between 15 and 20 slides that is designed for a longer presentation of around 20 minutes, and which is also used as an informative document independent of the oral presentation.
3. Winning speech delivered at the MIT Start-up weekend in 2010, transcribed from video retrieved from http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UBNJh2rOOlI.
4. Transcribed from video retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dqIEE-g_-Uc.
5. David Rose, 2007 TED talk retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lzDBrMisLm0.
6. Wesley Eames, winner of a sales pitch competition and founder of a start-up company, personal blog at https://medium.com/@weames/getting-pitch-perfect-lessons-from-techstars-b87e461b4f5b.

7. Transcribed from video retrieved at http://www.businessinsider.com/the-best-startup-pitches-of-all-time-2012-11?op=1.
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Bayley, S., & Mavity, R. (2008). *Life's a Pitch: How to Sell Yourself and Your Brilliant Ideas*. London: Random House.

Clark, C. (2008). The Impact of Entrepreneurs' Oral "Pitch" Presentation Skills on Business Angels' Initial Screening Investment Decisions. *Venture Capital: An International Journal of Entrepreneurial Finance, 10*(3), 257–279.

22

TED Talks

1 A "Hypergenre", and Virtually a "Speech Brand"

TED conferences, where TED talks are delivered, began in 1984, and their website was launched in 2006. "TEDx"—the possibility to hold an independently organised event under a TED licence—was launched in 2009, and ten years later, in 2019, more than 100,000 talks have been given at almost 30,000 TEDx events.[1] Originally, TED brought together speakers from the fields of technology, entertainment and design (hence the TED acronym) to talk about their professional area of expertise. Since then, however, it has expanded to potentially include any topic that can be addressed by speakers from many walks of life.

As a consequence, TED talks do not share one common purpose—albeit that associated with the pleasure of talking and reaching out to an audience. In some ways, TED talks come close to a gratuitous form of public speaking. For the speaker, they do not result in anything tangible like winning a competition, receiving financing, a qualification and so on. However, once speakers have delivered their talks, these are uploaded onto the Internet and work like a springboard for the notoriety of the

speaker. TED speakers covet the idea of "going viral" and reaching the widest possible audience, like the most popular talks which have received to date over 50 million views.

TED is a truly social phenomenon: it has put a modern face on the age-old practice of oratory. It has made public speaking popular, investing it, even if TED refutes the term,[2] with an entertainment value like it has never had before. As one commentator puts it, TED has "somehow made the idea of simply talking to a crowd seem hip. Indeed the act of going to see someone stand up and speak at length about something cerebral is now more popular than it's ever been".[3] And, while TED labels itself as a "non-profit" and disassociates itself from business and political interests, it has (just like the 3MT, but on a more mammoth scale) developed its organisation and the "TED talk" as virtually a brand. And, perhaps more significantly, it has come to be a major tool for personal branding for its speakers, acting "as a kind of shop window for speakers" and providing a space where every speaker can basically (re)invent him or herself.

As TED talks cannot be defined according to specific content or purpose (e.g. such as summing up the content of a PhD, or asking for money), or specific status of its participants (e.g. speaker who is a researcher), and just as they share no common generic organisation, they do not qualify as a speech "genre" on the same level as the other speeches studied elsewhere in this book. Instead, they are closer to the status of a "hypergenre". A hypergenre groups together instances of communication that adopt a similar format for a variety of purposes.[4] TED talks display an incredibly high level of conformity in terms of format and staging, according to a long list of specifications that are imposed by TED as part of their branding. This intense formatting is what provides TED talks with their unity.

Because TED talks correspond more to a hypergenre than to a genre, this chapter will be organised differently to the two previous chapters. Emphasis is placed here on the possibilities the format offers you, for example as speaker at a locally organised TEDx event. The focus will also be on the way TED talks typify the move towards conversationalisation that characterises modern-day public speaking and which has been one of the main threads of this book.

2   A Common Format to Reach a Wide Community

Intense Formatting

TED talks have evolved a lot since they were first created almost four decades ago. Early examples dating from the 1980s and 1990s feature speakers wearing suits and ties, standing behind a pulpit or sitting and using language that reflects a certain level of formality (e.g. "first part", "second part"…).[5] However, topics related to the then-emerging high-tech sector (e.g. the title of one talk was "Five predictions about computers"), and to discussion about the future ("Back to the future"). Also worthy of note is the fact that delivery back in the 1980s already included a slide show.

The slide show highlights the focus that TED places on the visual channel. The visual dimension has become paramount in what has truly become a performance. Although not compulsory, the slide show is still used in the majority of talks, and spotlights are literally placed on the speaker's body, which must be in full view and which stand out against the darkened backdrop of the rest of the stage. In addition, TED has developed a strong visual identity, and organisers of TEDx conferences must conform to a number of stipulations concerning staging[6]:

– The speaker stands on an iconic red, circular carpet;
– The speaker stands in front of the letters "TEDx", followed by the name under which the TEDx license has been obtained; the colour of these letters is limited to red, black or white;
– The stage is bare and there is no pulpit (cf. "Speakers may not use a podium or lectern unless special circumstances warrant it");
– Microphones are discrete: microphones on a stand and hand-held microphones are again only permitted in special circumstances;
– Dress code is semi-casual (cf. "Nothing too formal. No ties").

All these specifications produce a format geared to placing the spotlight on the speaker's body. As a TED speaker, you are encouraged to

"physicalise" your talk via hand gestures. These hand gestures are show-cased in the medium-length stills of speakers that appear online in the presentations of the talks.

After staging, the other main formatting constraint concerns the time limit of speeches, which is fixed at 18 minutes—a duration said to cor-respond to the maximum attention span of an audience. There is much insistence on thorough preparation, and on keeping texts short ("short, carefully prepared talks"—Anderson (2016: xii)).

The other main body of specifications concerns the filming of the speeches so that they may be uploaded to the Internet. TED has a com-pulsory two-part audience, made up of the live audience and the second-ary audience of Internet viewers. Compared to other contemporary speech formats, both parts of the audience are essential to TED talks. All must be filmed and uploaded to the Internet. At the same time, they have to be performed in front of a live audience (shots of which must be included in the Internet video). Delivery is conditioned by the filming of the speeches for the Internet audience: speakers have to adopt a specific dress code (e.g. avoid clothes with stripes, complicated patterns, or bright colours "that could disrupt lights"), and long lists of instructions are given for the sound and video recording (e.g. angles of shots). But the specific needs of the live audience are not forgotten: attention is paid to creating a special "experience" during the conference itself and to making sure that the live audience gets the most out of the talks as possible. For instance, sessions of talks have to be interspersed with "musical", "theatri-cal" and/or "meditation" interludes in order to rest their attention (which supports the claim that TED talks are indeed a form of entertainment—or "infotainment").

Reaching a Wide Community

TED talks are uploaded onto the Internet precisely in order to reach a wider audience. According to its mantras of "ideas worth spreading" for "a global community", TED has, since the creation of its website in 2006, turned its attention to reaching a worldwide community that includes potentially anyone: "It has become a place where big ideas *find a global*

audience. It is known simply as TED. And TED talks are little presentations that *anyone* can watch online for free"[7] (my emphasis).

However, this global audience is that of the "TED community", borne out of and completely dependent upon the speeches. This explains other constraints of the TEDx format: conferences must include the screening of several videos of previous TED talks taken from their website, and must begin with an official promotional video which begins with the following voice-over that refers to the values of the TED community, such as the integration of local communities, discussion of new ideas (that are "bubbling up") and concern for a "shared future":

> From Kenya to Columbia, from Iraq to Korea, in slums, in schools, in prisons and in theatres, every day, people gather at TEDx events around the world to hear the best ideas bubbling up in their communities. Today, you are part of a global conversation about our shared future.[8]

Rather than relating to any specific enclosing scene(s) or communities of reference that exist independently, TED talks construe their own discourse community. Let us now turn to what this means for you as a speaker.

3   A Space for You to Invent Yourself

Any Topic, Any Speaker

TED talks can potentially be about any topic, and be delivered by any speaker[9]:

> *There are TED Talks on almost every subject you can imagine: building your own nuclear reactor; stopping cyberbullies; exploring Antarctica; a better way to tie your shoes.* But what sets TED Talks apart is that the big ideas are wrapped up in personal stories and *they're mostly from people you have never heard of before.*[10] (my emphasis)

There has been a shift from researchers and professionals who impart their knowledge in their specialised sector, to a vast array of formats

which include, according to the list of categories that appear on the website, "the tech demo", "the artist's statement", "the issue talk" and "the performance" (e.g. music, dance, magic and puppetry). Many of the topics are now concerned with self-improvement and self-help. For instance, talks are organised on the website according to playlists whose titles include "Live your best life", "Talks to help you focus on what really matters", "Simple ways to spark your creativity", "What is genius?", "Explore philosophy" and "Trending".[11]

The result is that many TED speakers now come close to the status of mediator, or even guru. This switch goes hand in hand with speakers talking more about themselves, and sharing their personal experiences. Rather than *ideas* worth sharing the impetus is on *personal experiences* worth sharing. More than any of the other genres, TED pushes the speaker's own personality onto the stage like never before.

Personal Branding

Linked to this is the fact that these talks provide a space and a format via which speakers can invent—and reinvent—themselves. Interestingly, while officially, "TED speakers seek to make their ideas accessible to those *outside their field*" (Anderson 2016: xii) (my emphasis), many talks now feature speakers who have gained authority in one field or profession, but talk about another topic altogether. For instance, a physicist can decide to talk not about physics but about finding happiness. In this case, confirmed expertise in one area makes the speaker legitimate to talk about something else.

Alternatively, talks are being used by a new generation of speakers to carve out a brand-new area of knowledge or expertise, such as those showcased in the speakers' profiles that appear on the website. Alongside traditional job positions such as "social psychologist" or "neuroanatomist", we now find titles that appeal to a new nomenclature and that the speaker has clearly chosen for himself or herself: for instance, "life coach", "expert in leadership psychology" or "quiet revolutionary". And these self-proclaimed titles are generally closely linked to the title of the talk, for instance a "career analyst" talks about "The puzzle of motivation", a

"lie detector" about "How to spot a liar" and a "peace builder" about "Fighting violence with non-violence". TED offers a forum for personal branding (cf. the "shop window for speakers"), where, as a modern-day expert, consultant or coach, you can create and legitimate your domain of expertise.

4   Talking About Yourself

"Talks"

TED talks are exactly that—*talks*—and epitomise the shift towards the model of conversationalisation that has taken place within contemporary public speaking formats. TED speakers typically place themselves on the same level as their audience, a status that is in keeping with the sharing of personal experiences.

When you give a TED talk, you aim to create an impression of dialogue and of intimacy with your audience, bringing to the stage the dynamics of interaction on a far-smaller scale—as if, to quote Chris Anderson (2016: 10), you were speaking over the dinner table. Another metaphor used in relation to TED is that of the chat around the campfire, which recalls President Roosevelt's "fireside chats" of the 1930s and 1940s.[12] While Roosevelt's radio addresses were not recorded in front of a live audience, in both cases the aim was/is to create the impression of a one-on-one conversation, and a warm, cosy atmosphere.

A "Global Conversation"

At the same time, however, the conversation is global: the aim is to appeal to a maximum number of people. While speakers talk about their personal experience, this experience has to be of interest to the audience and be linked to the collective concerns of the community. Your TED talk therefore needs to negotiate between two points of view: the individual/personal and the collective/general.

How Do I Package My Topic to Make It Both Personal and of Collective Interest?

Let us examine two examples. For instance, you have always been concerned about the environment. This is a confirmed topic of collective interest. For work experience as part of your degree, you spent six months in Cambodia working for an ONG whose aim is to reduce plastic waste and to raise local awareness. This provides you with the personal experience that offers a new angle to the confirmed topic, and gives you authority to speak about it. But you cannot stop at this personal experience. You also need to deduce from it some thoughts on a more general level. For instance, you discovered one of the reasons why locals throw plastic bags on the ground, leaving them to accumulate in the environment: they use plastic bags to wrap food, like they once used banana leaves, which they always threw away into the environment. You can quote this example and then move to the general point that it illustrates: that is, that much work still has to be done in terms of communication with the local population and not just with industries and business. And this switching between personal (specific) experience and what can be learnt from it generally needs to be done throughout your speech.

Now let us take the opposite example: you are a sociolinguist whose research is about the language of young people. You have lots of interesting anecdotes and general claims about language and social behaviour, but this topic does not relate to you personally. Quite the opposite: as a researcher, your aim is to be objective and critically analyse your object of study. So, how can you put a personal slant on this? You remember a time recently when you were on a bus and overheard fellow passengers discussing what they thought about the way teenagers now talk. You decide to use this anecdote to introduce the issue of stereotypes about language—and about young people. Very much like what we observed in the case of the 3MT, the fact that this anecdote derives from your personal experience and not from something you read in a book or learnt from a survey you conducted creates an individual, human angle that you yourself embody and which will speak to your audience.

We saw the same strategy in Jeff Lichtman's TED talk (cf. Chap. 2). While it is a talk on science, it does not begin with anything scientific: instead, it begins with a personal anecdote, and with an experience to which the audience can easily relate—that of riding a bicycle—and with the question, "Is there anyone here who learned to ride a bicycle as an adult?" This question is immediately followed up by the story of the speaker's neighbour, whom he observed trying to learn to ride a bike. The speaker gives a vivid, detailed account of the neighbour's story, which, finally, at minute 4 of an 18-minute speech, leads to the general question he tackles in his work as a neurobiologist:

> And in the question I'd like you to think about is what's the difference between my brain and the brain of this woman, who, as far as I can tell, is perfectly normal except she can't ride a bicycle. Neurobiologists think about questions like this. (J. Lichtman, "Connectomics", TEDxCaltech, Pasadena, California, 2013)

Significantly, the build-up to this question takes up 4 minutes of an 18-minute speech.

Most talks begin with speakers talking about themselves—even indirectly, as the neurobiologist did, by relating something that he had witnessed first-hand—before moving to the issue of general interest. TED talks showcase personal storytelling like no other speech type.

This is the case with one of the most viewed TED talks, delivered by the neuroanatomist Jill Bolte Taylor, whose own dramatic experience of a stroke uncannily increases her authority to speak about the human brain.[13] Before she gets to the part about her own stroke (at minute of 1.43), she begins by explaining why she first chose to study neuroanatomy, a choice relating to her personal family circumstances:

> I grew up to study the brain because I have a brother who has been diagnosed with a brain disorder, schizophrenia. And as a sister and later, as a scientist, I wanted to understand, why is it that I can take my dreams, I can connect them to my reality, and I can make my dreams come true? What is it about my brother's brain and his schizophrenia that he cannot connect his dreams to a common and shared reality, so they instead become delu-

sion? So I dedicated my career to research into the severe mental illnesses. (Jill Bolte Taylor, "My stroke of insight")[14]

After outlining the early part of her career, the speaker then comes to the dramatic moment when she announces that she had a stroke:

> But on the morning of December 10, 1996, I woke up to discover that I had a brain disorder of my own. A blood vessel exploded in the left half of my brain. And in the course of four hours, I watched my brain completely deteriorate in its ability to process all information. On the morning of the hemorrhage, I could not walk, talk, read, write or recall any of my life. I essentially became an infant in a woman's body.

Immediately after these words, an assistant carries onto the stage a real human brain that the speaker takes into her hands, creating an unsettling but powerful visual link between personal experience and empirical research. And the speech is visually striking in the way the speaker acts out the content of her speech with hand gestures that accompany almost every sentence. After the brain has been handed back to the assistant and carried away, the speaker then spends the greater part of the speech recounting her near-death experience. But the general point of the speech—that which teaches us something and links it to the collective interest—is a teaching about the difference between the left and right hemispheres of the brain. And the speaker dramatises this difference by staging a dialogue between the two hemispheres, for example:

> And I'm asking myself, "What is wrong with me? What is going on?" […] Then all of a sudden my left hemisphere comes back online and it says to me, "Hey! We've got a problem! We've got to get some help." And I'm going, "Ahh! I've got a problem!"

To defuse the dramatic tension, humour is used here, as it is throughout the speech. After winding up the personal part of her speech with the fact that it took her eight years to recover from the stroke, Jill Bolte Taylor draws from this individual experience a lesson that she offers her audience, switching from "I" to "we":

So who are we? We are the life-force power of the universe, with manual dexterity and two cognitive minds. And we have the power to choose, moment by moment, who and how we want to be in the world. Right here, right now, I can step into the consciousness of my right hemisphere, where we are. I am the life-force power of the universe. I am the life-force power of the 50 trillion beautiful molecular geniuses that make up my form, at one with all that is. Or, I can choose to step into the consciousness of my left hemisphere, where I become a single individual, a solid. Separate from the flow, separate from you. I am Dr. Jill Bolte Taylor: intellectual, neuro-anatomist. These are the "we" inside of me. Which would you choose? Which do you choose? And when? I believe that the more time we spend choosing to run the deep inner-peace circuitry of our right hemispheres, the more peace we will project into the world, and the more peaceful our planet will be. And I thought that was an idea worth spreading.

In true TED talk fashion, the speaker is not speaking here as a scientist but as a spiritual guide, a sage offering up a lesson of life. And this is done through "talk", or language that stages an interaction. It begins with a generic "we", before switching back to "I", then to "you", then returning to generic "we", and then finishing with "I". Short, direct questions frame the passage, with one at the beginning ("So who are we?") and a ternary series at the end ("Which would you choose? Which do you choose? And when?"). And to close, the speaker returns to a personal viewpoint, this time not as the main character of a personal story, but to express her personal beliefs and thoughts ("I believe…"; "I thought…"). She thus brings into even sharper focus the individual voice which, characteristic of Anglo-Saxon ethos, conditions the entire speech.

Notes

1. According to the TED website, https://www.ted.com/participate/organize-a-local-tedx-event, consulted March 1, 2019.
2. "Entertainment" features as part of the TED acronym not as a means or purpose, but as a potential speech topic.
3. Hickman, A. "Conference Speakers and the Digital Revolution", April 19, 2017, https://www.jla.co.uk/conference-speakers-digital-revolution/#.XFvzCc17lPb.

4. Examples of hypergenres include letters, emails, blogs and so on. The status of a "hypergenre" (Maingueneau 2010) comes close to what Fairclough (1994: 68) calls a "disembedded genre".

5. Early talks retrieved from https://www.ted.com/talks/nicholas_negroponte_in_1984_makes_5_predictions?referrer=playlist-30_years_of_ted#t-53263; https://www.ted.com/talks/danny_hillis_back_to_the_future_of_1994?referrer=playlist-30_years_of_ted.

6. Quotes in this section are taken from the official TEDx guidelines that can be viewed at: https://www.ted.com/participate/organize-a-local-tedx-event.

7. Rose, C. "TED talks", 60 Minutes, April 19, 2015, retrieved from https://www.cbsnews.com/news/ted-talks-60-minutes-charlie-rose/.

8. Transcribed from video retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N-l1xtCMnpw.

9. The only restrictions in terms of content are in regard to political or religious agendas, or advertising for overtly money-making purposes.

10. Rose, C. Ibid.

11. Categories observed between January 2018 and March 2019.

12. Roosevelt's fireside chats were decisive in redefining the relationship between the president and the American people during a time of economic crisis, allowing the president to explain government policy directly to the people, "as if they were sitting around his fireside".

13. This talk features in the list of the most popular TED talks (the video of the talk, delivered in 2008, had received more than 24 million views by January 1, 2019.

14. Video retrieved from https://www.ted.com/talks/jill_bolte_taylor_s_powerful_stroke_of_insight.

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23

Some Characteristics of the New Oratory

The previous three chapters presented descriptions of three iconic genres belonging to the New Oratory. But what do they have in common? The New Oratory operates a paradigm shift that is tightly connected with the development of online video and smartphones during the first decade of this century. Digital technologies offer new possibilities in communication and force a new assessment of why and how language is used (Baron 2008). Indeed, apart from being a means of dissemination, they have conditioned these speech formats in fundamental ways.

The following aspects can be highlighted:

1. The New Oratory is indicative of the new work culture and entrepreneurial ethos that have been brought about by the Internet;
2. The New Oratory partakes in the new information order and the horizontal transfer of knowledge also engendered by the Internet—and the subsequent reorganisation of discourse communities, which now integrate non-specialist audiences;
3. But in a certain way, the New Oratory runs counter to the new forms of virtual, impersonal forms of communication promulgated by digital technologies, and fulfil the vital need for live, embodied discourse.

1   The New Work Culture

Personal Branding

Academics "selling" their research potential, developers pitching an idea for a startup, TED speakers carving out a new area of expertise: the digital age has redefined public speaking, which is no longer reserved for *public* figures. Internet video provides a means of expression for private individuals, with the potential to transform them into public ones. Actors from many sectors of society (e.g. corporate, technology, innovation, academic) are now not only able to claim a public voice but are in fact obliged to do so, precisely because of the new business models that the same technology engenders.

Indeed, the Internet has resulted in a shift in business models from "bricks" to "clicks", or from industry to services, where, unlike industry that produces material goods, the only requirements for start-up companies are capital, ideas and software. In addition, the Internet has led to a "disruptive economy"; for example, individuals attempt to seize business opportunities like those pitched in the reality TV programs, where new entrepreneurs are looking for investors.

Simultaneously, the world of work has become increasingly global and mobile, based on "projects" which are limited in time and involve missions that are constantly changing and being renegotiated. In the context of the "negotiation revolution" (Fisher et al. 2011), language has come to play a pivotal role. The formats belonging to the New Oratory result directly from the new need to negotiate and finance such projects. Delivered as part of competitions, 3MTs and investor pitches are indicative of a world where we are always competing in order to convince potential business partners, and where we are constantly on the lookout for new ideas in order to reinvent ourselves.

…And Corporate Branding

Branding is closely related to the New Oratory at many other levels, beginning with the fact that certain speech types have virtually become

brands themselves, such as TED talks and 3MTs. The latter contribute not only to the personal branding of the research professional, but also to the institutional branding of universities, beginning with the university that invented the format, which has registered "3MT" as its own trademark.

And the New Oratory is an essential part of corporate branding, starting with that of the high-tech sector. The new speech formats have played a key role in the promotion of digital technology brands. Just as technology was one of the original themes of TED talks (cf. TED: "*Technology*, entertainment, and design"), Steve Jobs' iconic keynotes became the cornerstone of Apple's marketing strategy.[1] And, compared to product launches of the past, it was now the CEO himself coming out onto the stage to present the products. A diversified range of public speaking formats are now part of modern-day corporate communication, and many of these have thrust into the limelight the CEO, who is called upon to play the role of spokesperson and guarantor, to publicly embody the values of the company. This increasingly public role of the CEO is directly linked to the shift in emphasis in the corporate world from "shareholder" (or specialised) communication to "stakeholder" communication, which targets the wider community of individuals, namely consumers, who recognise themselves in the company brand. At the same time, there has been an increased public interest in CEOs and entrepreneurs, with the entrepreneur having become the object of popular culture (again illustrated by the reality TV shows featuring investor pitches). An entrepreneurial ethos now extends beyond corporate contexts and is the characteristic ethos of the New Oratory.

An Entrepreneurial Ethos

As discussed in Chap. 1, Anglo-Saxon speaker ethos is direct and personal. In this, it echoes the individualistic, entrepreneurial ethos associated with the new capitalist economic model. Such a speaker ethos is amplified in the New Oratory, where the benchmark is that of the high-tech or start-up entrepreneur. Steve Jobs set the new gold standard for public speaking by integrating into a slick presentation format a casual

and friendly speaking style. This style has been adopted by subsequent Apple leaders, as well as other Silicon Valley/GAFA personalities such as Mark Zuckerberg or Jeff Bezos. The same style has been taken up by CEOs in sectors outside the high-tech industry (e.g. see recent Starbucks or Walmarts shareholder meetings). And this style characterises not only investor pitches but also 3MTs and TED talks.

The entrepreneurial ethos of the twenty-first century is casual and genuine, but at the same time committed, and also respectable. Steve Jobs left his mark on the world of communication because he injected into the inherently formal, institutional context of public speaking a new type of informality. In keeping with this age of horizontal as opposed to vertical relations, these new-age entrepreneurs also renew the Protestant work ethic by suggesting that they are ready to, as it were, roll up their sleeves and work as part of the team. The speaker ethos is not distant and authoritative, but genuine, unassuming and friendly—hence the use of jokes and some self-deprecation. Informality is reflected in the language, via colloquial language and non-technical vocabulary (e.g. "guys", "really amazing"). And, most strikingly, the new dress code for the CEO, which is now adopted by many other professionals, is no longer the suit and tie, but jeans and shirt (cf. Jobs' iconic turtleneck sweater). In New Oratory formats, male speakers do not wear a tie; this is an explicit rule in the official guidelines for TED talks.

However casual, this specific speaker ethos also emphasises commitment. Speakers must display the level of motivation and enthusiasm that is expected of today's entrepreneurs. In the case of the 3MT, one of the two main components of the official judging criteria is "engagement". Similarly, passion is often cited as a key criterium for investor pitches: if speakers are passionate about their project, they are more likely to win the support of their team, and are also more likely to devote the time and energy to see the project through. The ability to perform as speaker points to the ability to perform in any professional capacity. Speakers need to show they know exactly where they are going: they are articulate and do not mumble or hesitate, they master the technical accompaniment such as the slide presentation, and they show mastery of their body, holding themselves confidently and using gestures that reinforce rather than distract from what they say. The fact that speakers place their body in full

view reinforces the idea that "what you see is what you get" and, therefore, the value of authenticity.

Finally, a key component of this entrepreneurial ethos is respectability. The speaker fosters the image of a decent person, motivated by values which are of a virtually moral order. This is again a throwback to the Protestant work ethic, and is a defining feature of American corporate culture (see the comparative analysis of the French sociologist d'Iribarne, for example 2009). A recurrent theme of contemporary entrepreneurial discourse is that of doing good in order to change the world, as stated by Tim Cook in the keynote quoted in Chap. 1:

Changing the world and making it a better place is what it's about for us.

Similar formulations are frequent in Silicon Valley-type keynotes and investor pitches. The speaker/entrepreneur is invested with a mission, a noble cause based on a belief system (cf. "we believe"—Chap. 8) that is a key ingredient in the construction of the brand community. Steve Jobs cultivated the image of a new-age guru, which he reinforced by playing on numerous religious references.[2] As noted in the previous chapter, certain TED talks also foster a speaker status close to that of spiritual guide, or sage, particularly those that, according to one of the explicit aims of TED, set out to "inspire" their audience.

2   Horizontal Knowledge-Sharing

Non-specialist Audiences

Another characteristic of the New Oratory is that it participates in the horizontal transmission of knowledge that is a direct result of the Internet. According to this new information order, knowledge is "shared" (cf. TED's mantra "ideas worth sharing") between non-specialists across disciplines. It is no longer the property of "experts" to be transmitted "vertically". Speaker authority and credibility are no longer institutionally based, but construed within the discourse itself. In the New Oratory formats, this is reflected in the non-distant, friendly component of ethos discussed in the previous section, as well as in the fostering of a dialogue with the audience, to be discussed in the final section of this chapter.

Moreover, horizontality is reinforced by the fact that there is often no stage (e.g. 3MTs, investor pitches), and in other formats (e.g. corporate keynotes), the stage is getting lower and lower, so that the speaker appears spatially on the same level as the audience.

With this has come a redesigning of discourse communities. Specialised discourses (e.g. academic, corporate) are being decompartmentalised and replaced by non-specialised ones, or at least reorganised around the new purpose of catering to a non-specialist audience. The three genres presented in the previous chapters share the fact that they are not confined to only one community and are instead located between several enclosing scenes (cf. Chap. 3). This point is highlighted by one commentator, who talks of "a digital technology conversion [that] re-patterns human thought and *community*" (my emphasis)—and of a situation where "access to knowledge expands while attention spans contract".[3] Reduced attention spans are a product of the digital age and are associated with non-specialist audiences; they are linked to the concision of the New Oratory formats, which, in the three examples that have been studied, all have an imposed time limit.

"Showledge"

A number of commentators outside the Anglo-Saxon world have underlined the affinity between the new formats being discussed here and American-type "infotainment", where the aim is not just to inform but at the same time entertain. The lead is taken from keynotes, which have been described as "not just presentations, but representations […] during a keynote, the company's big boss presents new products in a very theatrical way. It's an extremely efficient and well-orchestrated show, of undeniable media impact".[4] Or, in the case of three-minute-thesis competitions, academics "turn into presenters and are cheered on by the audience, in what comes close to a sound-and-light show and echoes reality TV".[5] In such set-ups, speakers become pseudo-stars: for instance, winners of the 3MT are presented as "research stars",[6] and the competition is presented on one university website as "a competition that will make you a research rockstar presenter",[7] while winners of investor pitches are designated on the original start-up weekend website as "techstars".

Slick performances not only point to a high degree of commitment and professional competency, but also produce what will be referred to here as "showledge": that is, the specific way the New Oratory packages within a show-like format knowledge for a non-specialist audience. Knowledge is transmitted as part of a full sensory experience. For instance, keynotes and TED talks are conceived of as an "experience" (cf. "the TED experience") to be "delivered" to the audience.[8] Showledge appeals particularly to our sense of sight, with the incorporation of the visual accompaniment in the form of the slideshow, and the emphasis placed on the speaker's entire body and extensive use of hand gestures (compared, for example, to the "talking heads" of the television era). As noted in Chap. 4, people no longer listen to speeches, they watch them. The heightened theatricality of the New Oratory is symptomatic of the visual, media-crazed world in which we now live—that of the "videosphere" (Debray 2004), a world dictated by appearances, in which we have notably "rediscovered the human body".

3   Embodied Speech

New Oratory in the Context of Digital Communication

Unlike the communication set-up which founds public speaking, digital technologies have engendered new, virtual, non–face-to-face forms of anonymous, disembodied speech. We live in a new era where "[o]nline interaction with anonymous individuals from around the world increases while social interaction with those nearby decreases"[9]—an era moreover where "[t]he prevalence of texting and social networks is creating a generation of people who will struggle to verbally express their ideas" (Donovan 2014: 5). From group text messaging and emails, "like" clicks, or Twitter posts and so on, to interactions conducted directly with machines, via messages that we either read or hear (be it automatic answering services, do-it-yourself supermarket or petrol station cash registers, Microsoft's Cortana, Google Home etc.), our world is becoming increasingly crowded with anonymous utterances. These place us in the role of a speaker who can make contributions that are unsigned or

that we sign with a "pseudo", a fabricated digital identity; alternatively, they place us in the role of an addressee who is on the receiving end of utterances that cannot be traced to a human source.[10]

These new forms of communication are diametrically opposed to public speaking, which implies a speaker—whom we can see and whose voice we can hear—addressing a live audience in real time.[11] As one commentator notes, the digital revolution could have posed a potential threat to the "speaker industry": Due to the fact that people have access to everything in a click, why would they still be willing to travel to live events?[12] But in fact, the opposite has occurred, with the contrast with these virtual forms bestowing a new, added value on public speaking:

> In a world where we experience so many of our interactions via the tablet/ smartphone and social media feed, a need for something "real" and tangible has developed. […] We have become so removed from reality, that those occasions when we do sit in a room with hundreds or thousands of others watching a speaker have become all the more powerful, potent and *necessary*. We think we are in a more socially connected world, able to "share" every nugget of interest we stumble upon online, yet this is no substitute for the atmosphere and sense of bonding that comes with a funny, poignant, insightful or (crucially) *unfiltered* moment at a crowded live performance.[13] (Original author's emphasis)

New Oratory as Personal and Contextualised

Not only that, almost as a form of reaction to the new disembodied forms of communication, the new formats of public speaking have amplified the direct and personal dimensions of public speaking. In the New Oratory, the speaker speaks in his/her own name (e.g. "I think"; "I believe"). Moreover, the speech is literally embodied by the speaker's body which is there to be seen in full by the audience. Compared to the oratory of the past, the New Oratory is characterised by this heightened sense of personification and embodiment.

This is what Chris Anderson, the head of TED talks, refers to when he identifies the additional "human overlay" that is imparted by live, oral performance in the context of today's digital landscape. In the case of

3MTs, for example, recorded presentations (e.g. via Skype) are strongly discouraged: "As an important aspect of the competition is audience engagement, anyone who would choose to present via conferencing facilities would be at a disadvantage compared to other competitors."[14]

Unlike written (anonymous or pseudo-linked) postings on the Internet, the New Oratory (like YouTube tutorials and vlogs) play on the "interiority of sound", or the specific way that meaning resonates for the addressee when it is conveyed vocally, a point underlined by Ong (1982) in his description of orality. Spoken language, in comparison to writing, remains inherently close to human experience, is empathetic and participatory. In addition, it can carry a spiritual and at times a sacred dimension, which allows for the construal of a community (a point underlined in literary scholarship)—attributes that explain why public speaking has become such an essential component of corporate branding, and construction of other types of community. Such functions, it can be argued, cannot be fulfilled by a machine-generated voice.

These aspects which, as we saw in the first part of this chapter, are essential to the new entrepreneurial ethos, are an inherent part of the potential of the spoken medium, and have been particularly developed in the New Oratory (cf. strategies observed in 3MTs, pitches and TED talks: using the pronoun *I*, telling personal stories, referring to personal feelings and emotions, etc.). And, according to Anne Perkins, political commentator for *The Guardian*, a personal voice is now necessary if traditional types of speeches, such as political speeches, are to "go viral" on the Internet (e.g. video extracts posted on social media): Perkins identifies "authenticity" and "being passionate and sincere" as "the new Gettysburg", or modern-day benchmark for political speeches. Discussing why certain British MPs' parliamentary speeches have gone viral, she notes that "each time, the subject was something *they knew at first-hand*—they were talking about their constituents and the enormity of Westminster's failure to understand and respond to their needs" (my emphasis).[15]

Creating a connection with a specific audience has always been a staple of public speaking and considered, well before the digital age, the added value of speech over writing—as the sociologist Erving Goffman pointed out when he raised the question of why people choose to attend an academic lecture rather than simply read a written summary of it:

They attend—in part—because of something that is infused into the speaking on the occasion of the text's transmission, an infusion that ties the text into the occasion based on the tacit notion that *what the audience hears has been formulated especially for them at that moment*. (Goffman 1981: 186) (my emphasis)

But the New Oratory provides a stark contrast to the declamatory oratory of the past. TED conferences stage *talks* that could take place over the dinner table; 3MT contestants are advised to adopt a "conversational" mode (e.g. "Imagine that you are explaining your research to a close friend or fellow student from another field"[16]), and so on. The illusion of intimacy is created thanks to technology (e.g. discrete microphones; close-up shots). Within the polished, "showledge" performance format, the New Oratory fosters the illusion of an interaction with the live audience which, when disseminated digitally, is experienced by proxy by the secondary audience made up of Internet viewers, making the message that much stronger (particularly when, as is generally the case, digital dissemination is individual: Internet viewers do not group together each watches alone). The negotiation between the intimate and the collective results in a "collective intimacy", in what may be considered a new form of realisation of McLuhan's "global village" (McLuhan 1962).

The illusion of interaction is produced thanks to the different strategies discussed throughout this book: scripts which favour dialogic forms (e.g. direct questions, discursive markers), a mode of production which feigns spontaneity (e.g. absence of pulpit or script) and a scenography that plays down the albeit compulsory technical accompaniment (e.g. wireless microphones and headsets, prompters out of sight and none of the multiplication of giant screens which are now used for instance in political meetings). This discrete technological accompaniment is indicative of the ambivalent relationship between new technologies and the New Oratory. While the New Oratory depends upon technology, it characteristically works to conceal it.

Digital technologies are revolutionising society in ways that we are only just starting to comprehend. The new public speaking formats that form the New Oratory are symptomatic of the need for discourse that is embodied, that fosters a personal, authentic voice, and that is integrated

into a polished performance that places great impetus on the visual dimension. These different components, which inform language choices, define a new key competence that needs to be mastered by manifold actors within the contemporary workplace. And to be mastered, this competence needs to be understood in relation to the new world of communication, information, work and social relations in which we now live.

Notes

1. The term "keynote" is used here specifically in the context of corporate communication, distinct from its original and more general meaning (first introduced in the United States at the end of the nineteenth century) designating a speech given by a high-profile speaker to "set out the central theme" of a conference or convention (Oxford Dictionary). "Keynote" is also the name of Apple's slideshow software, competing against Microsoft's PowerPoint.
2. Robinson, B. "The Marriage of Religion and Technology: Reading Apple's Allegorical Advertising", January 27, 2014, retrieved from https://secondnaturejournal.com/the-marriage-of-religion-and-technology-reading-apples-allegorical-advertising/.
3. Robinson, B., Ibid.
4. "La Keynote d'Apple, c'est quoi?", *LCI*, September 9, 2014, retrieved from http://www.lci.fr/high-tech/la-keynote-dapple-cest-quoi-1557946.html.
5. Miller, M. "'Ma thèse en 180 secondes': les doctorants, de nouvelles stars", *Le Monde*, June 6, 2016, retrieved from https://www.lemonde.fr/campus/article/2016/06/01/ma-these-en-180-secondes-les-doctorants-ces-nouvelles-stars_4929927_4401467.html.
6. See, for example, profile of 2018 University of Queensland winner, retrieved from https://bel.uq.edu.au/article/2018/09/awards-celebrate-bel-research-star.
7. University of Alabama in Huntsville: retrieved from https://www.uah.edu/events/icalrepeat.detail/2018/10/26/7436/-/three-minute-thesis-and-dissertation-competition.
8. "*Deliver the experience*" is the title of a chapter of C. Gallo's *The Presentation Secrets of Steve Jobs*, McGraw-Hill Publishers.
9. Robinson, B., Ibid.

10. It is worth mentioning a recently developed practice that is used by big companies in the preliminary stage of the recruitment process, where candidates are now required to record themselves on an online platform as they answer questions in a time limit, in front of no live addressee, albeit the computer screen.

11. The New Oratory also stands out in the digital landscape of communication in that, compared to the many brief, fragmented utterances that now proliferate, it offers an increasingly rare opportunity for speakers to develop their ideas over full-length, synoptic texts, albeit within a limited time frame.

12. Hickman, A. "Conference Speakers and the Digital Revolution", published online on April 19, 2017, retrieved from https://www.jla.co.uk/conference-speakers-digital-revolution/#.XFvzCc17lPb.

13. Ibid.

14. https://threeminutethesis.uq.edu.au/resources/faqs-competitors.

15. Perkins, A. "The Secret to Jess Phillip's Great Political Speech? Wit and Authenticity", *The Guardian*, February 1, 2019, retrieved from https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2019/feb/01/jess-phillips-speech-labour-mp.

16. https://threeminutethesis.uq.edu.au/resources/3mt-competitor-guide.

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Appendix: Language Toolkit for Dialogue

Introducing someone:

I'd like to introduce you to X
May I introduce you to X
Today we're pleased to welcome X, from…
Our guest speaker today is X
I'd like to hand the floor over to…
So I'd like you to give a round of applause to …/ I'd like you to welcome

Thanking someone after their speech (and launch a discussion):

Thank you for your presentation, I really enjoyed that/ I found that very
  interesting
Thank you for raising so many interesting points here this morning
Thank you, that was very insightful
Thank you, we all enjoyed that very much
I'd like to thank you for that, now I'm sure there are questions from the
  audience/from the floor

After that insightful/remarkable/very entertaining talk, I'll now open up the discussion to the audience
That was a riveting talk, so I'm sure there are questions from the audience

Answering a question:

Thank you for that question
That's a good question, I'm glad you asked me that
I'm often asked that question, and what I answer is that…
Yes, that's an important aspect of the problem
Thanks for raising this issue, I didn't have time to cover it in my talk

Avoiding a question:

I don't think that point is relevant for the present discussion
I think this goes beyond the topic/the subject of our discussion
Let's leave that issue to one side, it's not directly related

Referring to another participant:

I agree with what X has just said…
I quite agree with X on this matter
As my colleague/ X has (just) said

Expressing disagreement with another participant:

X's arguments do not hold up to scrutiny
I have some reservations about what X has just said
I don't hold the same view as X on ….
I don't see things in the same way as X does
I beg to differ with X on this point

Interrupting someone:

I'm sorry to interrupt you (just one moment), but…
Let me interrupt
Let me stop you here a moment
I'm sorry to interrupt you here but…
I'm sorry for interrupting, but…
Could I just interrupt to open up the debate…

Digressing:

I'd like to digress here one moment to say that…
If I could digress here a moment
I would like to digress here
I'm going to digress here a minute/a little
Could we just pause here a moment to consider another issue
I would like to sidetrack one moment…
Allow me to sidetrack to mention…

Expressing agreement:

I completely/fully agree with you
You're absolutely right
You are (quite) right to say/point out that…
I couldn't agree (with you) more
I share your view (on…)
That's exactly what I think
I couldn't agree with you more

Expressing disagreement:

I disagree with you on/about…
I'm afraid I don't agree
I have (major) reservations about what you say regarding…

I'd like to raise an objection
I'd like to refute the claim that…
I don't share your opinion on…
I would prefer to say that…
I have to disagree with you on that point
I beg to differ with you
The argument regarding…doesn't hold

Conceding …and refuting:

Though I fully agree with you on …., I still believe that…
I grant you that… but I have doubts about…
It is true that… but…
I have to concede that… but…
You have a point there, but don't you think that…
I accept that… but…
I'm inclined to agree that… but…
You're right up to a point but …
I take your point but…
I understand what you're saying but…
I hear where you're coming from on this, but…

Index[1]

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[1] Note: Page numbers followed by 'n' refer to notes.