

Some notes on how to become a great speaker



UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI
DI PADOVA

M. Grazia Busà
Università di Padova

Breaking the ice

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Can we become great speakers?

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Some people are born with that...



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But you can train yourself
to become a good
speaker !

“All the great
speakers were
bad speakers at
first.”

- Ralph Waldo
Emerson



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Aims of this course

Explore ways in which we can
give our best when we are
giving a presentation

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The first steps

- Understand the basics of communication
- Learn a few communication strategies
- Learn how to structure your presentation

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For you to do **during** and **after** this course

- Apply these strategies
- Practice
- Practice
- Practice

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Outline

- **Introduction: What is communication?**
- The importance of non-verbal language
- How do we communicate: Examples
- Strategies for an effective communication

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Look at the following examples

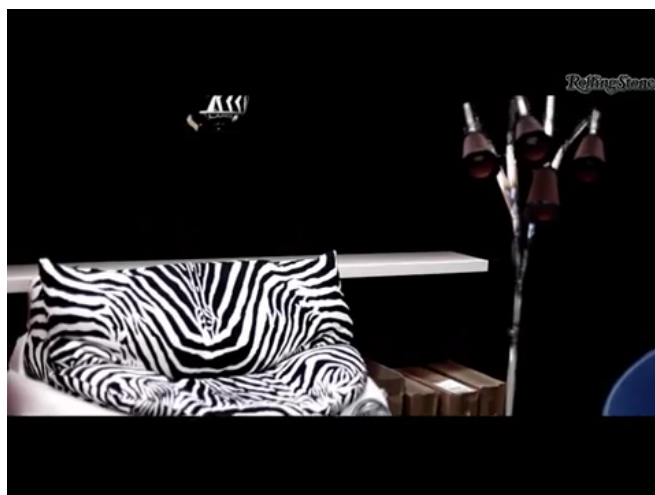
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Example 1



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Example 2



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Questions

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What are the differences
between these speakers?

How do we perceive
their personalities based
on the way they speak?

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How long did it take you to decide
that these people
are not good speakers?

How long did it take you to decide
whether you are going to
listen/believe them?

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Was your judgement
based on what they said?

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People think that words
(oral and written) are the
preferential
communication channel



But this is just an
effect of our literacy!!

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**Communication is not made
of words only**

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Communication is both verbal and non-verbal

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Communication is verbal and non-verbal

	ORAL	NON ORAL
VERBAL	Spoken word	Written word
NON VERBAL	Voice intonation, voice volume, tones...	Movements of face and body gestures

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What else is there?

discourse
practices

smell

outfit

touch

color

light

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Is verbal or non-verbal
more important?

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How important for communication?

- In human communication, meaning is only partially transmitted through words (about 7%)
- **30%** of human communication occurs through **tones and intonation**
- **55 – 60 %** of human communication is non-verbal, occurs through **body language**

Source: Mehrabian, A. (1972). *Non-verbal communication*. Chicago, Illinois: Aldine-Atherton.

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Why is that?

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Remember who we are...

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Senses are an important part of our communication system

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Is the verbal component really non-important?

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Grammar: An example from written language

From a real day-to-day business exchanges

From: "XXXXX" <xxx@xxx.co.kr>
> Date: November 29, 2007 2:19:35 AM PST
> To: "Xxxx Xxxx" <xxx@xxx.com>
> Subject: RE: software X license.
>
> Dr. xxxxxx,
> You **seems to be don't need** to concern about software X.
> As Mr. Xu's checked, the existing problems and output file are still running and updated in spite of applying your recommendation into xxx.tcl
> What he wants is **the below**.
> 1. to stop the **exisiting** xxx running process
> 2. it should not be affected about the current converted output file
> Also, they have **a several queues** including test and obsolete queues after checking with '%xxxxxx list'. [...]
> If you're available **at** tomorrow morning (my time), let's go forward.

> Best Regards,
> XXX

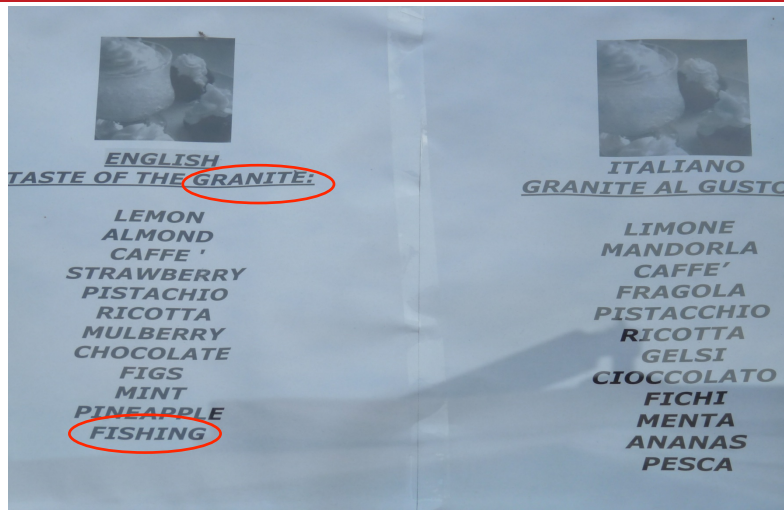
Is communication affected?

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**However...
Look at this
example**

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Lexicon...
A greater hindrance to comprehension?



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Linguistically and Culturally-colored lexicon
may be absolutely incomprehensible

- If you do not know Italian, you have NO CLUE as to what the people in the bar are talking about...
- Granite (rock) ← granita
- Fishing ← pesca

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Communication in a global context

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The question of accuracy vs. tolerance in a globalized world....

Pardox of globalization:

Increased contacts with and between non-native speakers have...

- Increased the level of **tolerance** for “incorrect” grammatical, lexical and pronunciation forms
- Increased the possibilities for linguistic and **cultural clashes**

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How to decide between tolerance and accuracy?

As a rule of thumb, the core issue is....



Intelligibility and
ease of
communication

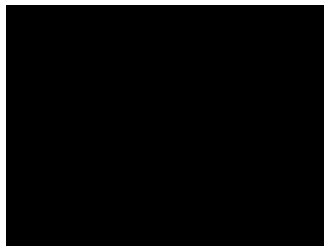
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**There are a lot
of components
to good
communication/
speech**

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How about pronunciation?

How about pronunciation?



So, was the crow
angry or hungry?

More dramatic cases



So, did he
manage to
cause the ship
to sink in the
end?

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Discourse practices

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For example, small talk...



What is small talk and how does its use differ in our country?

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Another example, presentation styles...



How does this man's presentation differ from the way a presentation would take place in Italy?

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How about non-verbal language?

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what are the effects of
gestures and intonation in
communication?

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In general...

All of our hands movements have a meaning that we may not be aware of...



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'Universal' vs cultural gestures

- Some gestures are shared by human beings:

- **Smiling** as a sign of happiness or pleasure.



- Some widely-used **gestures may not mean the same in every culture**
 - pointing, waving, shaking or nodding the head



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Culture-specific gestures

Many non-verbal gestures are 'culture specific'



can cause misunderstandings between people from different backgrounds

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An example: Nodding head in India

- In most cultures, nodding head is used to mean 'no'
- In India, people nod their heads to show agreement → may give rise to misunderstanding in intercultural communication

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An example: Nodding head in India

00:00 1:14 (M) 10.5.18



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while in most cultures nodding is used to mean 'no', in India it can mean 'yes'

Hand gestures may be culture-specific

Gestures may be very culturally-bound and people may be completely unaware of their meaning in a foreign language

Hand Gestures may be culture-specific

- Gestures may be very culturally-bound and people may be completely unaware of their meaning in a foreign language



Is she aware of the meaning her gesture can have?

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The meaning of Italian Gestures

Italians are well known internationally for using their hands a lot when they speak

Italians assume that the meaning of their gestures is also understood by other language speakers. However, most Italian gestures are meaningless to a non-Italian, or carry a completely different meaning in another language.



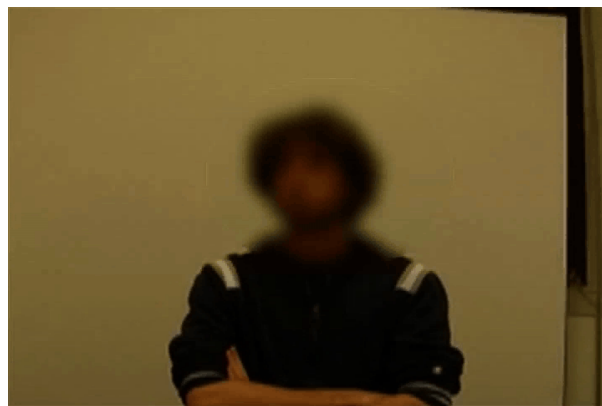
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The meaning of Italian Gestures



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How about overall body language?



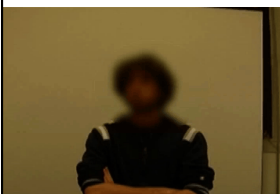
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How about overall body language?



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How about overall body language?

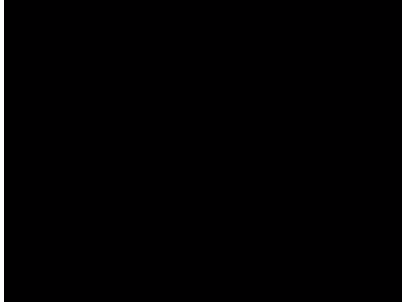


- The speakers' body may be communicating too little /too much
- In either case, the body is not really interacting with the audience

Are these speakers really communicating?

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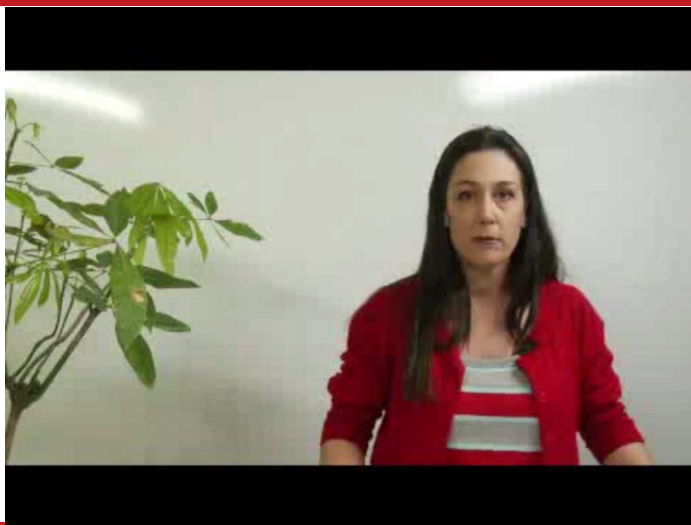
And finally, intonation...



- No speech pauses
- No emphasis on any part of speech
- Intonation is flat and monotonic
- Speaking style is not looking for an interaction with the listener

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Reflect on the effects of intonation...



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In conclusion....

Learning to be a good speaker is not easy

- Requires the acquisition of skills at very many levels



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Can it learnt and how?

- Awareness of the many levels at which communication takes place
 - Lectures, Videos from the Internet, Observations
- Practice
 - **Try out**
 - **Don't be ashamed**
 - Rehearsing in front of the mirror
 - Videorecording oneself...



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An example from my class



Good results
can be
obtained