

Public Speaking
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Lecture: 51
Effective Use of Language in Public Speaking

Welcome back to NPTEL certification course on public speaking, my dear friends! Today we are going to begin the lectures of week 11. Most of you might remember well that in the previous week, we talked about oral presentations and we specifically emphasized upon the use of visuals and also the use of connectives. But to tell you the truth, what actually connects a speaker or a presenter is his control over language.




Now, every audience member will try to judge you as a speaker and that also with your control over language. How genuine are your ideas or experience can be reflected through your language. Majority of public speaking situations hinge all language and that is why today's lecture has been titled as effective use of language in public speaking. My dear friends before we begin let us have a beautiful quote by Angela Carter, a very famous English novelist and writer who is known for her bold assertion of feminism and some of her very famous books which actually made a lot of news all over the world are *The Bloody Chamber*, then *Knights at the Circus* and *The Passion of New Eve*. Apart from this, she has many other works to her credit. Let us have a look at what Angela Carter says about language.

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“Language is power, life and the instrument of culture, the instrument of domination and liberation.”
- Angela Carter



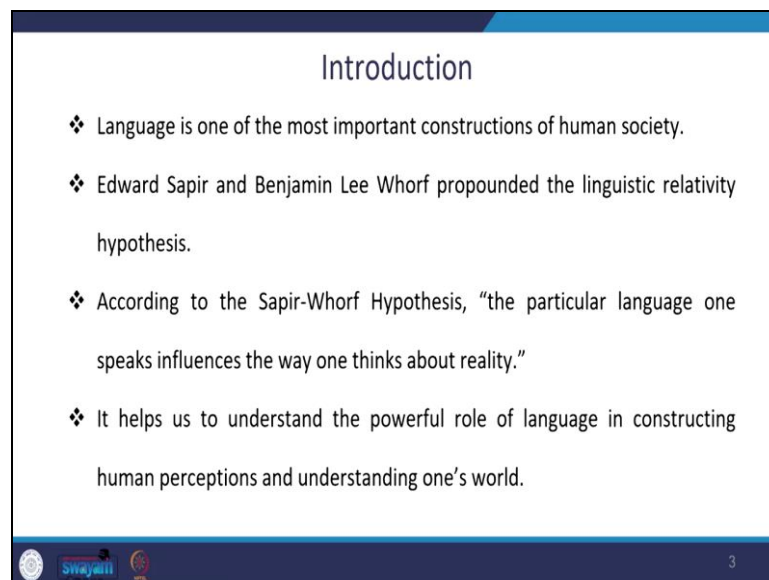
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She says---“Language is power life and the instrument of culture the instrument of domination and liberation.” So, very accurately you had she said that language is power it actually tells people about one's identity culture and it is an instrument of domination and liberation. It is only through a language that not only can a speaker control the audience members but it is once again the use of effective language through which people and Nations can be liberated.

Now, when we talk about language let us try to understand what some of the famous philosophers have observed about language. It is actually Aristotle who says that man is different from animals only because of language.

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Introduction

- ❖ Language is one of the most important constructions of human society.
- ❖ Edward Sapir and Benjamin Lee Whorf propounded the linguistic relativity hypothesis.
- ❖ According to the Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis, “the particular language one speaks influences the way one thinks about reality.”
- ❖ It helps us to understand the powerful role of language in constructing human perceptions and understanding one’s world.

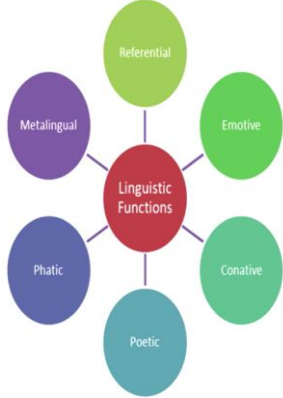
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At the same time Descartes goes on to say that ‘Thanks to language, man became man that is why language can be considered to be the most important constructions of human society it would. Sapir and Benjamin Lee Whorf propounded the linguistic relativity hypothesis. According to them the particular language one speaks influences the way one thinks about reality hence language is an indicator it actually lets you know about a person's personality identity culture and also his background information. It actually enables us to understand the role of language in constructing human perceptions and understanding one's world.

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Functions of Language

- ❑ Russian Linguist Roman Jakobson states that there are six functions of language.
- ❑ Each function has its own purpose to achieve and establish a communicative act between the addresser and addressee.



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Now you might be thinking what actually are the functions of language and how we can make our language effective as public speakers. Many of you might have heard the name of Roman Jakobson, the famous Russian linguist who states that there are six functions of language and all these six functions of language actually connote some quality of human being. Actually, it also establishes a communicative act between the sender and the receiver, between the addressee and the addresser.

Now, on the right hand side you can find here all these six functions. We shall be depicting them analyzing them in details the very first is referential. When we refer to something actually when we talk about the referential function of language, it actually helps in the transfer of information.

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Functions of Language

1. Referential: Objective use of language. Information transfer.
2. Conative: Calls for attention. Receiver-oriented.
3. Emotive: Deals with emotion and suggests the tone of speech.
4. Phatic: Establishes social connection.
5. Poetic: Aesthetic and rhetorically oriented.
6. Metalingual: Discusses the language in itself - its function, meaning, features, ambiguity etc.

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It is actually an objective use of language. Conative actually reflects a call for attention and it is receiver oriented. We have already discussed in the beginning of this lecture how communication as a process involves two parties the sender and the receiver. Now, language has another function that is emotive as a speaker when you speak you appeal to their emotions whether you are speaking as a speaker who has to deliver a speech or at times, because for various purposes you use various languages.

Then comes phatic; phatic actually intends to establish social connection greetings you wish somebody fine. So, all these commander phatic communication phatic function of language. Then poetic--- all of us some way or the other sometimes or the other actually try to make use of language that is poetic where we actually aim at aestheticism and rhetoric. We have already had a lecture on other use of rhetoric in public speaking and then comes meta- lingual function.

Meta-- as we have discussed in the lecture on meta- communication that is communication which is beyond communication beyond language it actually meta communication discusses the language in itself, its function, meaning features ambiguity there are so many things that can come under the term Meta. Meta language, meta lingual that is apart from language beyond language rather.

Now we have often been discussing written and oral communication and you might well remember are the difference that occurs between a written communication or a written language and oral language.

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Oral and Written Language	
Oral Language	Written Language
Employs conciseness.	Pays attention to detail.
Few syllable words are chosen.	Word syllables range vary.
Short sentences are preferred.	Large sentences are also accepted.
First-person pronouns.	Third-person pronouns.
Flexibility with formality and tone.	Standard and concrete.

As public speakers you fulfill both the functions---- when you have to give a talk or a presentation as I have been discussing. You first write your presentation or talk but my dear friends when you write you actually follow a different method where you pay more attention to details where you actually may make use of words of different syllables, then you can go for larger constructions.

You can also go for larger paragraphs but when it comes to spoken communication or spoken language we actually believe in a sort of conciseness. Because it is spontaneous, no? when you speak orally are you make use of those words which are of few syllables and you become a bit choosy, rather I will say. Because you only understand what or which word will fix or work or function better in which condition.

Especially in oral communication right from conversation to speeches or to presentations we actually prefer a sort of words and most of the time we go for first person pronouns. We also have some amount of flexibility with formality and tone. You can change your tone with the help of your voice but in written. You actually believe in a sort of accuracy you believe in a sort of standard and you want everything to be completely correct grammatically whereas when you speak you may go for shorter sentences.




Sometimes you go for one word sentences also but in written that is not the practice. As an effective presenter or as an effective speaker for several situations, it is better if you can follow the six C's of language use. Six C's of communication rather.

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Six C's of Language Use

❑ Michael Osborn et al.,(1988) in their book entitled *Public Speaking: Finding Your Voice* jots down six key elements of language:

- ❖ Clarity
- ❖ Color
- ❖ Concreteness
- ❖ Correctness
- ❖ Conciseness
- ❖ Cultural Sensitivity



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

Michael Osborne and others in their book on public speaking entitled *Finding Your Voice* they actually chart down six key elements of the language six key elements of the language what are their clarity, colour, concreteness, correctness, conciseness and cultural sensitivity. We will try to discuss it in detail one by one. First comes clarity--- whatever one speaks whatever one utters has to be clear

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Clarity of Thoughts and Words

❑ **Clarity:**

- a. Clarity comes as the essential element and posits itself as the first standard to be met when it comes to public speaking.
- b. One must have clarity of one's own thoughts in order to express clarity in their words.
- c. Finding the most suitable words helps the speaker in achieving clarity.
- d. The element of clarity is essential for an understanding to develop between the addresser and the addressee.



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Clarity is an essential element and it actually is the first standard for a public speaker to be met because as a public speaker one tries one's level best to drive home one's point and to convince the audience members and that is possible only when one's ideas are clear. One must not only be clear any choice of language but also in his thoughts in order to express clarity in their words. Sometimes you will find that many people choke their thoughts in a sort of jungle of words where the audience members feel very difficult to comprehend it.

So, finding the most suitable words only can help a speaker achieve clarity and in order to develop a sort of relationship also because if the speaker is not clear naturally the audience will also be left. You'll lose your audience if your thoughts are not clear if you do not have clarity of purpose. Now the question my dear friends is----- what actually can impair or what actually can impede Clarity of thoughts. What actually disturbs and destroys the clarity? The very first thing in this regard is jargon, fine.


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Factors Impairing Clarity

1. **Jargon:** Technical language that creates distance between speaker and receiver who are not acquainted with the vocabulary.
2. **Euphemism:** Although it relieves the tension of speech when talking about delicate issues, at times, it may obscure the truth and intention.
3. **Doublespeak:** The prodigy of two Orwellian terms namely "doublethink" and "newspeak" signifies the conscious distortion of language.



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Now you might be thinking what are jargons? Perhaps I might have referred to in some of the lectures the jargons actually are the technical words which are actually used in a particular profession every profession will have its own jargon and the people of that profession---- they do not have any difficulty in understanding those words because they are not jargons for them actually these words become jargons for other people for other members who are not familiar with these words.

So, it is actually a sort of technical language--- technical language that creates distance between speaker and receiver. Next is euphemism, fine it is actually a sort of literary device but then it can relieve the tension of speech when talking about delicate issues. It may sometimes, because you know, it is a sort of language that covers something fine euphemistic language. So, it may obscure the truth and intention. And then my dear friends, let us also come to something very important which many of you might be familiar double speak.

Now you might be thinking what are these double speaks. Actually this term double speak would first be used by George Orwell a very famous writer who in his very famous book, *Ninety Eighty-Four*. I mean this novel was written in 1949 it is actually a dystopian novel. Double speak is the prodigy of two terms namely double think and Newspeak. Now when we talk about double speak double speak which was actually coined by George Orwell.

As I said earlier they actually make subjects to accept two conflicting beliefs two beliefs which are conflicting in nature but then it appears as if they were true. Say for example, if one says--- war is peace. Now look at look at this expression war is peace, can war be peace but then it is one's way of saying it and again ignorance is strength, ignorance is bliss freedom is slavery. So, the terms are contradictory in nature but then when you go in the depth of it, you will understand that it actually is true, fine?

And then another term is Newspeak--- opposite of Old Speak in the same novel *Ninety Eighty-Four*, Orwell in a very deliberate and ambiguous manner contradicts language which he terms as New Speak this new speak in that novel was devised by totalitarian government of Oceania to replace English which is called old speak. So, the opposite of old speak. Now there are some examples for example for Ministry of Truth, Orwell uses the term as *Minitrue*.

Ministry of Peace he uses the term as *Minipax*, Ministry of Love *Minilove*, *Ficdep* for fiction department how interesting but then as a public speaker if you start using these it will actually pose a difficulty to your audience members. Hence, it is better that we have a control over the use of words. In this regard, I am very much tempted once again to make a mention of the court that George Orwell says and that can be applied very effectively when we are trying to make a sort of connection between language and thought.

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Connection between Language and Thought

“A man may take to drink because he feels himself to be a failure, and then fail all the more completely because he drinks. It is rather the same thing that is happening to the English language. It becomes ugly and inaccurate because our thoughts are foolish, but the slovenliness of our language makes it easier for us to have foolish thoughts.” (George Orwell)



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I have been time and again repeating that let there be a union between language and thought and you know what Orwell says is----- “A man may take to drink because he feels himself to be a failure and then fail all the more completely because he drinks.” Look at the beauty of language, my dear friends. “It is rather the same thing that is happening to the English language it becomes ugly and inaccurate because our thoughts are foolish. But the slovenliness of our language makes it easier for us to have fullest thoughts.” The implication is that you can make your thought slow and or dirty if you are not aware of the effective use of words in order to make a connection between your language and your thoughts. Now, another characteristic or another attribute of those Cs we were discussing is colour----- what do we mean by colour?

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Color of Language

- Color here refers particularly to the tone and vibrancy of language used, and not in contextual terms relating to race or ethnicity.
- It employs rich imagery and creative neologism that captures the attention of the listeners.
- Slang, which one should refrain from using in formal scenarios, embodies the colour of common reality. As a general semanticist, S.I. Hayakawa connotes slang as “the poetry of everyday life ”



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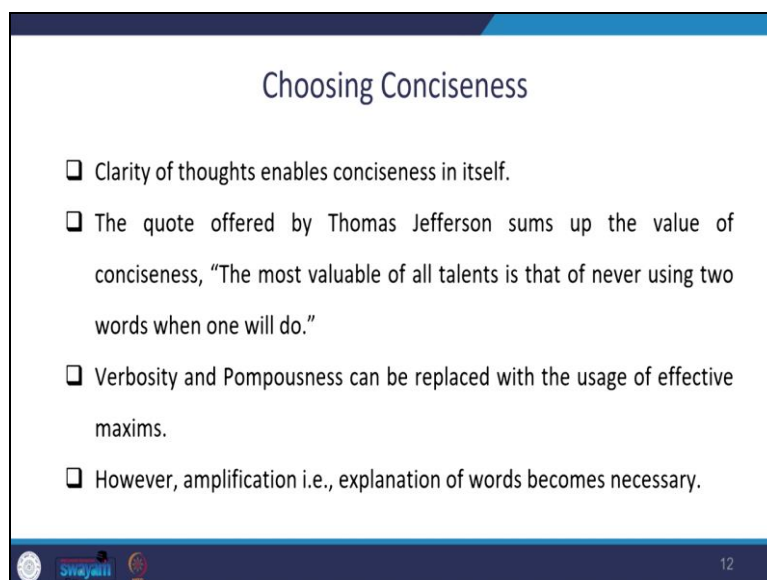
Colour is actually about the tone and vibrancy of language used and not in contextual terms relating to race or ethnicity. When a person uses language, he ought to observe, he ought to foresee how it will be responded to, because with a sort of tone and with a sort of vibrancy of language that we use we actually have to restrain ourselves from using language some way or the other that may hurt a community or a race.

Now, when we talk about colour we also have in our mind the use of imagery and creative neologism. My dear friends, remember well that when you are speaking, you are speaking to audience members who may not be from your own department, from your own field, from your own area. There may be people from different areas----- different cultures, different backgrounds, different languages.

So, if you start making use of imagery which you are acquainted with, but your audience members are not, then what will happen? It will actually obstruct the thought. Another is slang that also can come under colour which one should refrain from using informal scenarios, fine? As a general semanticist, S.I Hayakawa connotes slang as the poetry of everyday life. Even though we can find in this expression the meaning that it has become a part of it nonetheless it is better not to use slangs in formal settings, in formal gatherings.

Now when it comes to deciding how concise our sentences our expressions our paragraphs should be, one must try to understand that it is one's clarity of thoughts which can help one become very concise.

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Choosing Conciseness

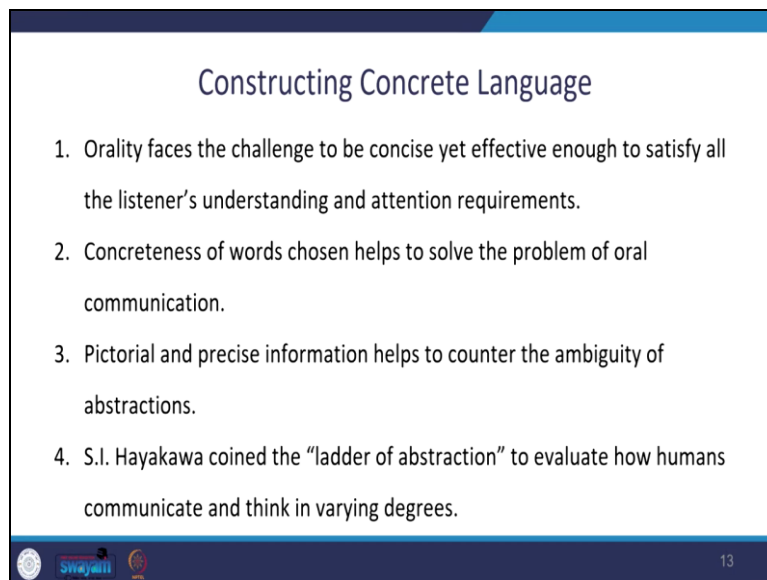
- Clarity of thoughts enables conciseness in itself.
- The quote offered by Thomas Jefferson sums up the value of conciseness, "The most valuable of all talents is that of never using two words when one will do."
- Verbosity and Pompousness can be replaced with the usage of effective maxims.
- However, amplification i.e., explanation of words becomes necessary.

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My dear friends, so many things can be said in a very extended manner but if you know the art of making it concise, making it precise, making it to the point then you appear to be a better communicator. Now, in this regard Thomas Jefferson's quote appears to be of immense value. "The most valuable of all talents is that of never using two words when one will do." Nowadays in many of us come across are the uses especially in colleges and universities you know. You will find students making plethora of uses of words like basic fundamentals true belief past history actually these are all redundant expressions and one need to be aware of making use of that. If it is possible, it is better that you use only one word that can reflect your thought or your aim. In this regard sometimes people become very pompous very verbose very wordy and you know these can be replaced by effective.

Sometimes you know a short sentence speaks more than a long sentence it is not needed my dear friends one should know a lot about words one may have a rich vocabulary but when it comes to use, it is better that you do not become pompous, otherwise you will become quite inimical to your audience members. So, explanation of words fine is very important of course if there comes a difficult word it is better for the speaker to explain that. And then comes concreteness let us try to use a language that is concrete in most of the cases of oral communication, oral presentation or speeches.

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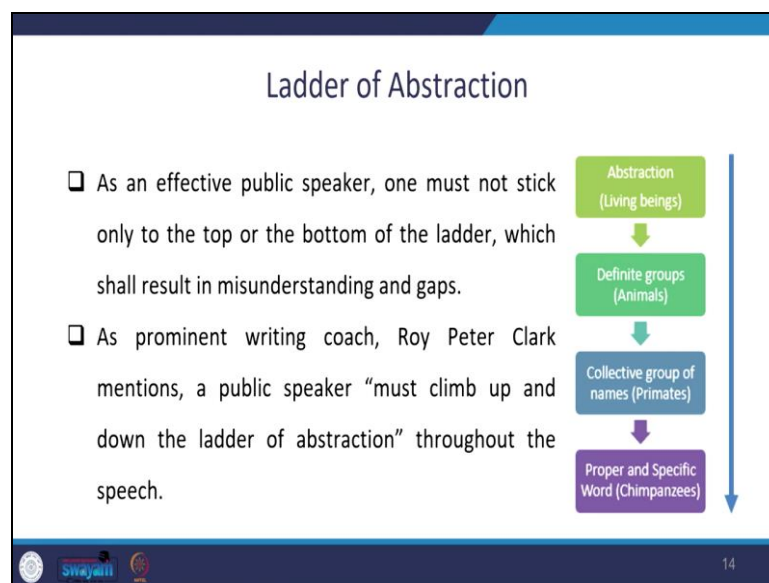
1. Orality faces the challenge to be concise yet effective enough to satisfy all the listener's understanding and attention requirements.
2. Concreteness of words chosen helps to solve the problem of oral communication.
3. Pictorial and precise information helps to counter the ambiguity of abstractions.
4. S.I. Hayakawa coined the "ladder of abstraction" to evaluate how humans communicate and think in varying degrees.

You will find are that we most of the time come across such a situation where we are not able to grab the attention of our audience members. So, sometimes if you become concise, again there is a problem because audience members if they do not have access to those words or if they are not familiar in what context you are using that----- explanation is needed by

difference. So, concreteness of words chosen can help solve the problem of oral communication.

In the previous lectures we have mentioned how a speaker can make his or her task easier by at times providing visuals pictorials, fine and then in this regard Hayakawa coins a term named **ladder of abstraction** and he says that it can help evaluate how humans communicate and think in varying degrees. Now, here is the ladder of abstraction you can find how when you are talking to human beings fine.

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As an effective speaker one should not stick only to the top or to the bottom of the ladder which can result in misunderstanding and gaps, is not it? So, as a champion of prominent writing, Roy Peter Clark mentions that a public speaker must climb up and down the ladder of abstraction. What is meant by that. When you actually climb up the ladder and you remain only on the top then it will be very difficult for the audience members to understand.

So, it is better that if you go up in terms of the uses. Now you can also come down, I mean there has to be a sort of variety of climbing up and climbing down the ladder of abstraction throughout the speech or throughout the talk. Now, we already have had a lecture on the use of significance of culture in public speaking but then all speakers need to understand the fact that they are not speaking only to one group rather there are so many groups and subgroups.

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

Correctness and Cultural Sensitivity

5. Correctness:

- ❖ Grammatical and lexical correctness becomes integral for a public speaker to maintain their credibility.
- ❖ Avoid Malapropisms i.e., making language errors by interchangeably using words of similar sounds.

6. Cultural Sensitivity:

- Apart from grammar, conscious and sensitive word choice concerning the cultural group of listeners also reflects the talent of a public speaker.

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Hence, a sort of cultural sensitivity is required and this cultural sensitivity can come to a speaker only when he is conscious of the correctness in terms of grammaticality, in terms of grammar, and then one should also try to, because in one of the lectures we have already given you examples about how one can make uses of Malapropism one wants to say something and the other one said something else that is Malapropism.

So, making language errors by interchangeably using words of similar sounds and then cultural sensitivity is a must one needs to be conscious of standards of grammar, word choice and also the cultural group of listeners. Because that way you are going to qualify yourself as a public speaker. Now, let us also try to understand even though we have been speaking a lot about making effective use of language.




But then how can it come especially to the new ones, it may become an uphill task just in the beginning but my dear friends, it can come with experience and sometimes you may appear that you have not been able to succeed or to have a satisfaction the way you speak but there are certain cautions that one can exercise. What are those? Using specific words sometimes you know what happens one wants to use further but uses farther.

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Some Cautions

- ❖ Make use of simple and natural language.
- ❖ Ensure to talk with the audience, not to them, not at them.
- ❖ Use personal references.
- ❖ Prefer active to passive verbs.
- ❖ Concrete and not generalities.
- ❖ Avoid using jargons unless speaking to your own professional group.

Different from/different from
Further/farther
Imply/infer
Lie/lay
Prescribe/proscribe




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So, one has to understand the difference between the two when one says further actually he means that next to or after this but when one says farther he is actually talking about distance. Further I am going to tell you. So, when I say further I am going to tell you meaning thereby I am going to tell you next. But my dear friends those who do not attach any importance to public speaking are farther from the truth.

Now look at the use again sometimes when a person makes use of imply, the word imply. So, what he does is in place of imply, he uses infer and in place of infer, he uses imply because he is not clear about the meaning of the two terms when you use imply that actually means meaning when you just infer that means what one has discovered fine and most often you will come across this sort of confusion especially among people who are either in a hurry or do not pay any attention to the beauty and the benignity of language.

Most of the time when one has to use proscribe they use prescribe and versa. when one says prescribe means it might have been prescribed by the doctor but when you say proscribe meaning thereby you have been advised not to use, is not it? So, one must try to understand are the difference between other words. Most of the time you might hear people saying--- I am different, I am different now, fine.

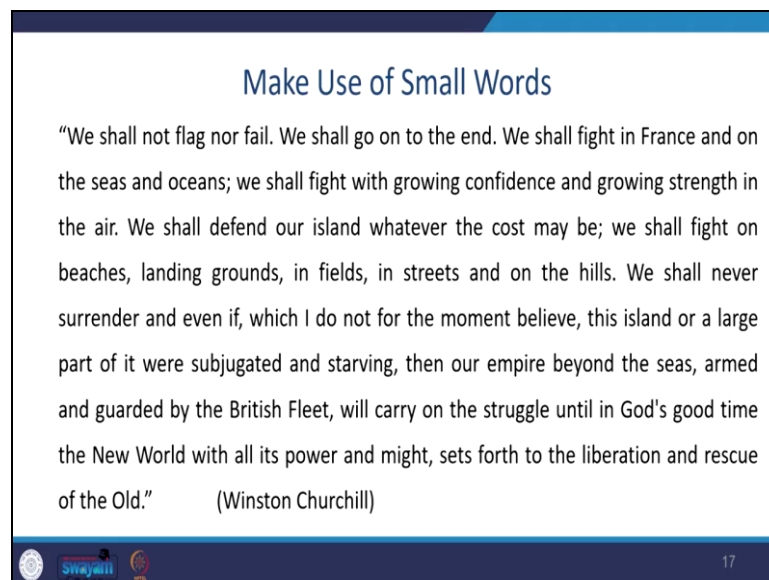
Sometimes people say he is different from his brother. Look at the beautiful use--- he is different from his brother actually is a comparison. But when I say next time when I visit I want to see this place different fine. Last time when I came here it was different. My dear friends, some of the questions that one should make use of are---- be simple be natural one

must talk to the audience not to them not at them meaning. Thereby interact but do not talk to them but not to them not at them.

Do not be sarcastic, do not talk about them rather you should talk with the audience. There is no harm as a public speaker to use personal references, because through that you are trying to bring them to the mainstream of discussion. Everyone wants to hear stories and when you provide a personal reference, no? People become very much interested in it. Active to passive most of the time I have been saying that either when you are writing or speaking, please make use of active and not of passive.

Do not go for generalities rather go for concrete words. Do not make jargons your pet words rather if something appears to you as a jargon for others, it is better to explain fine. Now since I have talked about making use of personal references and making use of small words let me hear refer to the words of Winston Churchill. You see, if you think of the person and you think of his grip over words you can find out how he chooses his words very carefully.

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Make Use of Small Words

“We shall not flag nor fail. We shall go on to the end. We shall fight in France and 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 beaches, landing grounds, in fields, in streets and on the hills. We shall never surrender and even if, which I do not for the moment believe, this island or a large part of it were subjugated and starving, then our empire beyond the seas, armed and guarded by the British Fleet, will carry on the struggle until in God's good time the New World with all its power and might, sets forth to the liberation and rescue of the Old.” (Winston Churchill)

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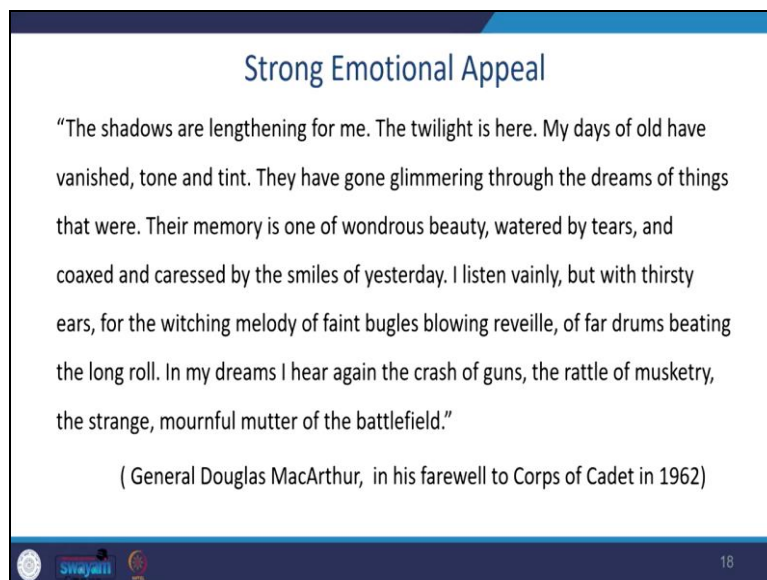
“We shall not flag nor fail we shall go to the end we shall fight in France and on the Seas and oceans we shall fight with growing confidence and growing strength in the air. We shall defend our island whatever the cost may be we shall fight on beaches landing grounds in fields in the streets and on the hills. We shall never surrender and even if which I do not for the moment believe this island or a large part of it were subjugated and starving. Then our empire beyond the seas armed and guarded by the British Fleet will carry on the struggle until

in God's good time the new world with all its power and might sets forth to the liberation and rescue of the old.”

If you look at these words by Winston Churchill one of the former prime minister of England, you will find that the choice of words is very specific no word here is difficult my dear friend and that is why we still remember him.

I had also referred to making some strong emotional appeal and this is strong emotional appeal can be made once again on several occasions but where one can bring some personal reference. Now, here I have taken some words of General Douglas MacArthur who was going to give a farewell speech to the Corps of Cadet in 1962 and you will find what a beautiful expression---- not only the selection of the words but the way he personalizes and what he says it is actually a occasion for farewell and he says.

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Strong Emotional Appeal

“The shadows are lengthening for me. The twilight is here. My days of old have vanished, tone and tint. They have gone glimmering through the dreams of things that were. Their memory is one of wondrous beauty, watered by tears, and coaxed and caressed by the smiles of yesterday. I listen vainly, but with thirsty ears, for the witching melody of faint bugles blowing reveille, of far drums beating the long roll. In my dreams I hear again the crash of guns, the rattle of musketry, the strange, mournful mutter of the battlefield.”

(General Douglas MacArthur, in his farewell to Corps of Cadet in 1962)

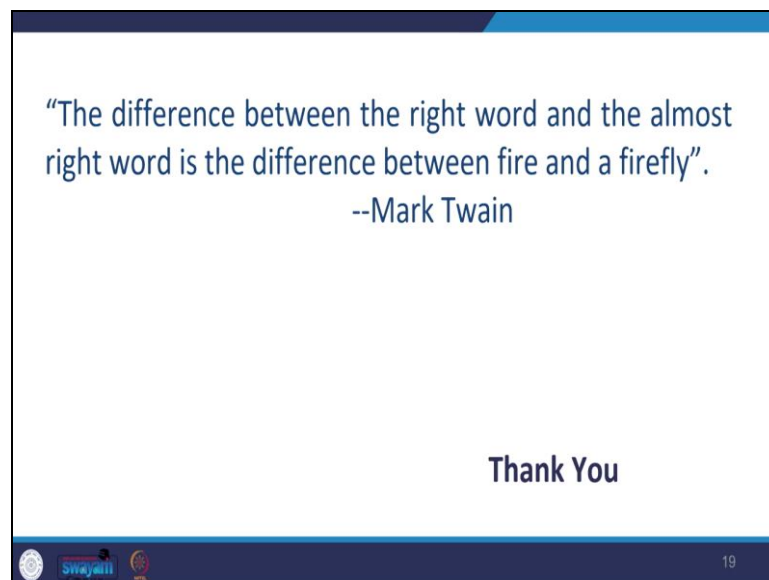
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“The shadows are lengthening for me...” He is giving a farewell to the cadets but then you see how a personalized personalizes. “The Shadows are lengthening for me the twilight is here my days of old have vanished stone and tint they have gone glimmering through the dreams of things that were their memory is one of wondrous Beauty watered by tears and coaxed and caressed by the smiles of yesterday. I listen verily but with thirsty years for the witching melody of faint bugles blowing revelry of far drums beating the long roll. In my dreams I hear again the crash of guns the rattle of musketry the strange mindful mutter of the battlefield.”

This is a farewell speech and the farewell is being given to Cops of Cadets but General Douglas MacArthur personalizes it by making a proper selection not only of a small verse but he actually puts colour in it he puts emotion in it, my dear friends.

Now having said all this I think it is time. Now that I asked you whether we have been able to make effective use of language or not I think we have to give several speeches and several presentations but what matters most is our control over words, our control over sentences our control over the length of paragraph that we are going to speak. And before we end this talk let me once again make commencement of a beautiful quote by none other than Mark Twain who says.

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"The difference between the right word and the almost right word is the difference between fire and a fire fly.", My dear friends I hope not only might you be enjoying these lectures but every day in every lecture you might be discovering yourself as to what were the faults in your speech or the presentation and how you can improvise upon them in order to become a better speaker, an effective speaker. With this, let me in this talk wishing you all the best, thank you very much.