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Presentations as students like them; Participants´ perspectives

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Abstract

The initial idea and inspiration for this paper derives from numerous encountered difficulties in preparing presentations. Further research resulted in a conclusion that preparing a presentation is a problem for many, especially students.
The main question this paper deals with is what it is that students look for in a presentation, i.e. what it is that they pay the most attention to. This was investigated in order to help future generations of students that might be having the same problem.

Few groups of students holding presentations in classes were observed and asked to fill out a feedback sheet evaluating various aspects (body language/gesticulation, voice, eye-contact, posture, knowledge and visual aids). The students were also asked to write their comments and whether there was something they would do differently.
The analysis of those feedback sheets led to the conclusion that body movements, knowledge and visual aids were the main focuses of those students that were observing presentations, in that order, with voice, posture and eye-contact being less focused on.

Zusammenfassung

Die anfängliche Idee und Inspiration für diesen Text enstand aus zahlreich eintretenden Schwierigkeiten bei der Vorbereitung von Präsentationen. Frühere Untersuchungen sind zum dem Entschluss gekommen, dass das Vorbereiten von Präsentationen für viele, hauptsächlich für Studenten, ein Problem darstellt.

Die hauptsächliche Frage, mit der sich dieser Text befasst, ist, welche Bestandteile für Studenten bei Präsentationen wichtig erscheinen, z.B. auf was legen sie den größten Wert.

Einige Gruppen von Studenten, die Präsentationen in Klassen abhielten wurden beobachtet und gebeten, einen Fragebogen mit verschiedenen Aspekten auszufüllen (Körpersprache/-gestikulation, Stimme, Augenkontakt, Körperhaltung, Wissensstand und visuelle Hilfsmittel). Die Studenten wurden auch gebeten, ihre Bemerkungen aufzuschreiben und ob sie etwas anders gemachthätten.

Die Auswertung dieser Fragebögen führte zu dem Ergebnis, dass Körpersprache, Wissensstand und visuelle Hilfsmittel die Hauptaugenmerke der Studenten waren, die die Präsentationen beobachtet hatten, mit der Folge, dass auf Stimme, Körperhaltung und Augenkontakt weniger Wert gelegt wurde.

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1. Introduction

One of the things I found most difficult to deal with at the beginning of my studies was standing up in front of people and talking without blushing, becoming confused or any other ´side-effect´, i.e. trembling hands or, in a worst case scenario, having a complete black-out. It took me some time and practice until I realized how public speaking in fact is rather simple and that it can be a very pleasant experience. Talking to quite a few of my fellow students and friends led me to conclude that I was certainly not the only one and that it is a common problem, if it might be called that way. That is exactly what inspired me to occupy myself more with skills of presentation-making and the idea of forming a few guidelines for others who struggle with the same problem as I once did.

Various approaches and ideas were considered before deciding to focus closely on what other students were paying most attention to and what they predominantly expected from a presentation. Since students at the University of Vienna were the easiest to reach, initial research started there. As usually happens with research, it broadened and opened up new horizons after a short while. Therefore a few variables as focal points had to be set at the very beginning. Details about the research and the methods will be discussed in Chapter 4.

Fortunately, at the very early stage of my research I got an internship with the United Nations Information Service, UNIS, based in Vienna. One of the main things UNIS dealt with was presentations made mostly for students. Therefore I was able to observe several presentations done by my colleagues at the time, in front of various groups of students who I had the opportunity to interview later on. After a few days I was asked to give constructive feedback to my supervisor N.N. (name had to be omitted), for which I used all the notes I had previously made. Since doing presentations was not on his priority list and his skills were fairly limited, we did several ´tests´ and innovations and observed the subsequent reactions of groups afterwards.

In addition to this, I had the privilege of attending the 11th European Psychology Conference which took place in Oslo in July 2009. This conference lasted for three days; it was very well organized and consisted of numerous presentations on various topics. Organization also covered discussions after presentations which offered an opportunity to talk to students about their impressions. Unexpectedly, an example for the best and most valuable presentation, according to student reactions, was found at this conference. All findings will be explained in detail later on in Chapter 5.

Finally, Chapter 5 also includes some comments and findings after few attended courses. One of them was the course on Presentation Skills at the *Bildungsforum,* in Vienna. Additionally, notes from an attended seminar on Alexander Technique are also included. The idea was to combine what was learned there with what was gathered while researching for this paper. In other words, the reason why those parts are included is to present the practical usage of advice that will be given later on.

As the best starting point and in order to better grasp what is being said today one would have to go back in past and consider first studies on rhetoric and public speaking in general. After that various linguistic theories, discourse and other areas of communication will be discussed. Current advice and ideas on presentations will follow these theories after which the focus will be on the analysis of the gathered data as well as the presentation of results.

Finally, as mentioned the ´field work´ will be closely explained and brought into relation to theory.

2. The nature of Communication

The idea of a successful communication or a verbal interaction between a speaker and a listener goes a long way back in to the past. Locke was fully aware of how problematic or difficult this can be to achieve and has addressed this issue on several instances. He said that “unless a man’s words excite the same ideas in the hearer which he makes them stand for in speaking he does not speak intelligibly” (1971:262). Brown (1995:6) mentions that the initial thought a speaker has, firstly has to be encoded into words and then transmitted orally via sound-waves to the listener who has to decode it and hence understand.

Similarly, Popper (1994:5) quotes Decartes who said that “my mind is now acting on my body, which produces physical sounds”. What follows are the reactions of the body, ears, and then the mind which triggers the process of thinking.

In order to properly understand the development of communication and its importance in today’s society, more specifically its importance for the purpose of this paper, which has been mentioned in the introduction, namely student oral presentations, we will firstly focus on the art of rhetoric and theory of public speaking.

2.1. Rhetoric

There is in a way a chronological flow in the development of public speaking. It can be assumed that public speaking as such has existed for centuries. This chapter offers an overview on how it was structured, explained, later on taught and applied to other contexts.

Generally speaking the main goal of public speaking is to elaborate, educate, offer arguments and eventually, ideally, convince the listener. (Aristotle 2000:7-38) Gutenberg (1995:327) claims ´speaking in public´ is where the study of rhetoric originates from. (Gutenberg in Carnagey 2005) Visual Thesaurus, i.e. Thesaurus version adapted for internet use, a software available online, offers several definitions of rhetoric, e.g. “study of the technique and rules for using language effectively (especially in public speaking”, “using language effectively to please or persuade”, and so on. Similarly Cockcroft and Cockcroft (2005:3) state that rhetoric is very broadly defined as the art of discourse or more precisely ´the art of persuasive discourse´ whereby both spoken and written language are understood. It is one of the oldest surviving systematic disciplines in the world: its original insights and techniques remain valid and it has survived precisely because of its capacity to adapt to ideological and social change. One of the earliest definitions and descriptions of rhetoric was made by Aristotle (384-322 BC) who said that rhetoric “may be defined as the faculty of discovering the possible means of persuasion in reference to any subject whatever” (1926:15).

Old Greek and Roman societies had worked on developing and mastering the skill of public speaking. It was used for argumentations and persuasions of a listener about one’s personal opinion. At that time it was mostly in court where orators would try to persuade the audience and the judge of the truthfulness of their arguments. Homer described public speaking art as a gift from gods to the ones they have chosen. One could gain prestige in society and be on the same level as any swordsman, which was important when taking into account that an army career was one of the most acknowledged ones at the time. That meant that those men lacking greater physical abilities were still able to climb the social ladder by talking. However, there were rules in public speaking that had to be obeyed and skills to be improved over years of education. Homer, Protagoras, Socrates, Aristotle and Cicero, are only few among many who dealt with defining, practicing and mastering public speaking.

´Means of persuasion´ as Aristotle calls them are classified into three main categories from which three main principles of language functioning can be derived. Those are:

ethos (persuasion through personality and stance),

pathos (persuasion through arousal of emotions)

logos (persuasion through reasoning). (Cockcroft and Cockcroft 2005:4).

Ethos or persuasion by moral character depends on confidence based on the knowledge of the speech itself and not on speaker’s character. (Aristotle I.ii.6 in

Cockcroft and Cockcroft 2005:16)

Cockcroft and Cockcroft (2005:16) divide *ethos* into two concepts: personality and stance. The first one is recognizable in any spoken interaction. What is very important in ´persuasive´ discourse is being able to identify with an audience, and leave a positive impression of someone's individuality. This is also central to the communication of personality. According to Cockcroft and Cockcroft (2005:17), a wider understanding of persuader-persuadee´s contact involves the entire framework of attitudes, understanding and sense of both positions as well as the subject under discussion. This is what Cockcroft and Cockroft (2005) call stance.

Next is *pathos* or the emotional engagement and understanding of the audience's needs. The orator should be aware whether the audience is listening out of pure interest in order to learn something out of obligation. By keeping these in mind and by use of imagery, for example, a speaker could evoke empathy and create engagement. Although *ethos* and *pathos* share similarities their major difference is with emotional engagement in recognizing audience's needs. This is the case with *pathos* while *ethos* focuses more on individual's personality in dealing with audience.

The third term that Aristotle uses is *logos,* i.e. modeling and judging argument. Cockcroft and Cockcroft (2005:17) mention other various meanings of *logos*, e.g. ´plea´, ´arguments leading to a conclusion´, ´thesis´, ´reason or ground of argument´, ´speech´ and ´verbal expression´. It implies the process of understanding what the debate is about, the range of arguments and the structure of thought.

Since rhetoric is persuasive discourse it can be referred to as ´controlled interaction´. What rhetoricians use are ideological, personal and contextual elements in conversation. They look for an appropriate register and choose words according to their understanding or their view of the public. By this choice, orators hope to achieve the best effect, affirmation and understanding. Nevertheless, the audience's response can never be predicted with absolute certainty. One can only prepare oneself for different scenarios, i.e. different responses that might occur. (Cockcroft and Cockcroft 2005:5)

Key terms for understanding the nature of persuasive discourse or rhetoric are dialogue and interaction. (Cockcroft and Cockcroft 2005:5) As an acknowledged system of persuasive techniques rhetoric has its roots in the culture of Greece and Rome. Law courts, political gatherings and democracy in Greece and Rome affected the rise of rhetoric. Imperial autocracy and various invasions stopped it until the Middle Ages when it started spreading again although cautiously channelled by Church and the State. Its revival was during the Renaissance thanks to rediscovered texts. In the 17th century Greece and Rome it was used as a political instrument. Today it is used in politics as well as in media where it is experiencing a renewed success in use. Speeches are written with careful choosing of words that might leave the most effect on the hearers, there are teams of people working on even smaller texts that are then read, by politicians for example, in front of the TV cameras and hence broadcasted to wider audience. In political election campaigns this can be most easily noted. Even by choosing one word that is then repeatedly stressed or pointed out politicians are able to influence people.

It has to be mentioned that rhetoric served the ´dual function of deliberation and decision making´ in Greece and Rome. It was used for means of accusation and defence in court as well as for persuasion in the Senate. Therefore the orator/rhetorician was the one who was ´in power´, who was able to persuade and influence people by using language accordingly to the need. This resulted in increased demand for rhetorical education. In turn, this then resulted in shaping of rhetoric as a separate, independent academic discipline. Three types of persuasion were developed for three specific functions:

political/deliberative – focused on what was practicable as public policy

forensic/legal – concerned with justice

demonstrative – the oratory of praise or blame used at funerals or other formal occasions. (Cockcroft and Cockcroft 2005:5-7)

Naturally there were scholars that were very critical of rhetoric and would not use it that transparently in their own public addresses. Still it was not easy to avoid it. One such scholar who was critical of rhetoric but tended to use it whenever it suited him was Plato. According to him the acceptable form of rhetoric would be rhetoric adapted to the addressee as an individual since addressing groups could not achieve anything important. Hence, he developed his idea of *kairos* (fitness or timelessness) which derived from Sophists whom he also disliked. “Kairos meant the exact matching of language to the addressee’s individual situation and needs.” (Plato, 1973 in Cockcroft and Cockcroft 2005:7)

The “Evolution” of Roman Society from the Republic to the Empire meant a change in the use of rhetoric. Cicero used it in both personal and public contexts, i.e. in political and legal speeches. He also focuses on *kairos* and indentifies three roles for the orator:

teaching (or proving)

delighting (giving pleasure)

moving to action or to reaching a decision. (Cicero 1988:356-357)

After the Emperor took over ruling of the State from the Senate the use of rhetoric was limited even when it was used in legal procedures. Nevertheless it was still studied and practiced. In AD 94 Quintilian (1920:2) showed the correlation of education studies and rhetoric. The Spread of Christianity throughout the Roman Empire triggered the spread of deliberative rhetoric, rhetoric used in one specific area, since it became the medium of preaching, teaching and disputation in turn motivating listeners to spiritual choice and action.

During the Middle Ages and later**,** the scope of rhetoric broadened to it being applied at every significant level from artistic, religious to political and practical. In addition, since works of Aristotle and Quintilian were entirely restudied and new approaches were printed in Latin, rhetoric went through the process of rebirth during the Renaissance. Consequently rhetoric was studied as art with an universal approach. This means that rhetoric studied as such could be applied in any country or culture; it was not specific but rather general.

Later on, in the 19th century most insight and influence on ´persuasive language´ came from poets and philosophers like Samuel Taylor Coleridge. According to Bailey (1965:137-146) Coleridge claimed that clear thought and effective communication depend on keeping everything in frame whilst sticking to the point and moving forward at the appropriate pace.

Burke, Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca would be the most influential writers of the 1950s and 1960s. Burke wrote *A Rhetoric of Motives*, which was first published in 1950, where he linked the strategies of persuasion to the motives that underlie them and stresses the unconscious as an important factor in persuasion**.** He showed how a speaker chooses forms of expression and adapts them according to impulses that drive towards communication in the first place. This will also be shown later on in this paper when literature on presentation making is more thoroughly dealt with. He also suggested that “effective rhetoric entails identification with the audience’s values, preoccupations, characteristic emotions and modes of expression”.(Burke 1969:3-46)

Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca published *The New Rhetoric* for the first time in 1958. They return to the idea of *kairos,* trying to find out what it is that makes a language persuasive to an extent that it moves an audience into action. Their New Rhetoric approach stated that “argumentation always had to be regarded in relation to public and to specific culture in which it is embedded”. (Perelman 2005 in Dam, Holmgreen and Strunck 2008:1)

Theories of New Rhetoric lead to the development of Rhetorical Criticism which was a reaction against the neo-Aristotelian view. This neo-Aristotelian view stressed perception of text and speech as discourse and communication that has impact on people and society.

Over the last century scholars became interested in rhetoric and its use not only in persuasion but also in everyday communication in modern society. They found it a very helpful tool in forming texts for the general public, for the public sphere and in criticizing public argumentation (Perelman 2005 in Dam, Holmgreen and Strunck 2008:1) Black (1965) saw how interwoven communication, ideology and society were, therefore he pointed out that it is important to study influence of discourse in the ´broader context´ and not exclusively on the physically present audience. Consequently he introduced a new concept, i.e. the second persona or the imagined listener. By creating and using this imaginary audience an orator would hence be able to adjust his speech and strategies to a worldwide, general public. (Black 1965 in Dam, Holmgreen and Strunck 2008:2).

Public speaking might be considered a gift from the gods but it is also a skill that according to Quintilian one had to practice in order to become highly successful. Through training one could acquire a sense of ´special link´ between the topic and the audience. Without it one might talk at length simply to try and evoke sentiment and find a common ground with the audience. But with training one would learn to recognize needs and adapt the speech and tone fairly quickly. Next to the orator's preparation and presentation was narration which was seen as ´multifaceted art essential to applying principles to situations´. Narration was in fact oration used to effectively express the perspective of the speaker on any given case or topic (O´Banion 1992:66-89).

When it comes to public speaking and preparation Aristotle and Quintilian offered advice on how to successfully prepare *peroratio* (introduction) and *recapitulatio* (summary) of one's talk. *Peroratio* should include a greeting and the presentation of a problem, of an issue or case to be solved as well as what attempt will be made to solve it. A speaker should make sure that the audience understands the theme. A *recapitulatio* on the other hand should be the repetition of the problem, issue or a case and of facts and arguments. Facts and arguments should be magnified and the speaker should try to evoke the required state of emotions in the audience in order to motivate them to action. This final, closing part of the speech was called *affectus* by the Romans. In Aristotle´s words:

> For the conclusion, the disconnected style of language is appropriate, and will mark the difference between the oration and peroration. I have done. You have heard me. The facts are before you. I ask for your judgement. (Aristotle in Dam, Holmgreen and Strunck 2008:33-35)

Later on in this paper in a chapter on presentations it will be shown that many contemporary ´advice-books´ on presentation make use of these same techniques. Even if Aristotle here referred mostly to the courtroom situation this is being applied in other settings as well. What modern authors also recommend for the closing parts of the speech is the usage of humour, anecdotes, repetition, contrasts, citations, metaphors or paradoxes. Aristotle and Quintilian referred to similar stylistic figures in their writings stating only that citations, anecdotes, humour and metaphors should be used with great care and consideration of the audience since they might easily be misinterpreted or not understood at all (Dam, Holmgreen and Strunck 2008:39-114).

Besides narration and the story itself, the importance and symbolism of posture, gesture and tonality has to be stressed. Such mimetic symbolism is highly creative; however the manifestation of such symbolism should be in correlation with the purpose of expressing it, i.e. in dancing, and of more interest for this paper, in speaking (Burke 1965:253). Since these aspects belong to a non-verbal way of communicating**,** they and their importance will be thoroughly explained in a chapter on non-verbal communication.

The role that Aristotle gives to language and speech corresponds to the role many scholars assign to discourse in today's society. Aristotle recognized that language influences our behaviour and attitude in social relations, or better said, in interaction. Discourse too is a concept that refers to interaction in society in a wider sense. There will be more say about discourse its definition and broader use in modern society in the coming chapter.

Since the focus of this paper is on oral presentations and due to the fact that nowadays there are a great many people offering their advice in this field, in the following chapters there will be an attempt to establish a link between ideas offered by Aristotle and his contemporaries and the usages of those ideas nowadays.

Regarding rhetoric and discourse there is not much space for new definitions only maybe for new applications and usages in different fields. Therefore, as *ethos, pathos* and *logos* exist in public speaking and since presentations are a form of public speaking these three categories exist and are applied in presentation making.

2.2. Lingustic Theories

Fairclough stated that there is an internal relationship between language and society where a language is a part of society, therefore “linguistic phenomena *are* social phenomena of a special sort, and social phenomena *are* linguistic phenomena” (Fairclough 2001:19). Which ever way people choose to communicate they do so while obeying existing social norms and codes. Regardless of how distant and individual some might feel they still use language according to social convention.

The fact is, the language used in a certain social context is not only reflecting that context, it is an important and constructive part of the context, its processes and practices. That is why social phenomena are seen as being linguistic. (Fairclough 2001: 9-19)

A long time before Fairclough discussed linguistic phenomena as social one Saussure (1857-1913) triggered an idea of language being a representation of reality, i.e. “arbitrary grouping of sounds or written signs that have culturally agreed meaning” (Saussure in Terence Hawkes 1977:76-87) Saussure firstly introduced the idea of the ´sign´ that consists out of the signifier and the signified whereby a ´sign´ is an actual word and the signifier a symbol (whether it's written or a sound symbol). The signified represents the meaning or the concept.

All human communication consists of multiple sign-systems that have a function of their own and in order to convey meaning between readers/writers, listeners/speakers. Taking into account the focus of this paper more emphasis will be on the listener/speaker interaction. Hawkes (1977:76-87) explains how Saussure presents the functioning of language along two opposite axes, vertical and horizontal.

Vertical axis is a paradigmatic one where a specific, appropriate word is chosen from various words.

Horizontal axis, on the other hand is a syntagmatic one which represents the relationship between words in a phrase, sentence or a clause. Cockcroft and Cockcroft (2005:19) mention this idea introduced by Saussure and relate it to public speaking stating that a “resourceful persuader will exploit the multiple opportunities for word choice in a carefully ordered sequence to achieve maximum effect". This could be understood in a sense that the richer the register a speaker/persuader has**,** the broader the usage of this register might be. Consequently the effect will be better if more effective or more appropriate words are used. This can be related to the previously mentioned idea of *logos* and can also be very easily applied when preparing or doing a presentation in a sense that a speaker can choose more effective, stronger words that are more likely to be remembered by the audience than the other. Example of such usage can nowadays be often seen in CNN videos of famous politicians or other influential people giving their say about some issue that should be dealt with or inviting wider audience to do so.

Naturally, communication between speaker and listener can be successful or not. Schmatzer and Hardt-Mautner (1989:17) note that what successful conversation consists of, both in a human and a technical sense, is all those skills and mechanisms that are necessary to get the message across correctly and without distortion from one person to another. Namely, before a message or an idea gets transferred from one person to another it must be encoded into signals, symbols or words. It is up to the receiver to ´get the message´ i.e. to understand it by interpreting the signals correctly. This was also Jakobson´s (1896-1982) view. He presented the pattern that is followed by every speech event or written communication:

addresser > message/context/contact/code > addressee
(Jakobson in Cockcroft and Cockcroft 2005:20)

An addresser, or in our case the presenter, encodes the message according to the given context, topic and chooses the words from mental register according to the presenter's perception of the audience. While encoding some message, a speaker involves his/her personal background, knowledge and experience. There are different manners in which a message can be encoded: speech, gestures, paintings, drawings, and so on. If it comes to a ´parallel encoding´, i.e. speech and gesture, an additional meaning might be encoded. (Schmatzer and Hardt-Mautner 1989:18). Schmatzer and Hardt-Mautner (1989:18) claim that "personal values, likes and dislikes, education, social status, communication skills etc. control the way a person communicates his/her ideas”. After encoding the message, a proper ´channel´ for giving rapport to the speaker must be used; verbal or non-verbal. Naturally, it may happen that the interpreted meaning is not the intended meaning as well. Whether the message was understood properly or not, can usually be judged according to the receiver’s reaction and response. What might cause the biggest discrepancies in understanding the message, either in verbal or non-verbal communication, are different cultural backgrounds. Words in a foreign language might be used wrongly or misinterpreted, whilst some gestures can unfortunately insult a person we are trying to talk to. (Schmatzer and Hardt-Mautner 1989:19)

Additionally, this there is Jakobson´s (1960) framework of language introduced by Schiffrin (1994:32-33). Jakobson differentiates six language functions “that are identified through the way utterances (texts) can be related to different components of the speech situation (context)”

	CONTEXT [Referential]	
	CONTACT [Phatic]	
ADDRESSER [Emotive]	**MESSAGE** [Poetic]	**ADDRESSEE** [Conative]
	CODE [Metalinguistic]	

(Jakobson 1960 in Schiffrin 1994: 33)

The *Emotive* function is oriented towards and related to the *addresser*: “My best friend won’t speak to me”;

referential function is oriented towards the *message* and *context*: “The next train to York is late”;

connative function is oriented towards the *addressee*: “Now you listen to me!”; *phatic* function towards social *contact*: “Hi! How are you?”;

metalinguistic function is oriented towards the *code* or language: “What does this word mean exactly?”

poetic function is oriented towards the *message*: “My love is like a red, red rose”. (Cockcroft and Cockcroft 2005:20)

There must be a given context where a direct contact among people is established. In order for a successful communication to take place an addresser has to first properly and understandably encode a message so that the addressee would then be able to decode it and respond accordingly. A more complex version of Jakobson´s model in a Figure 1. shown below offers an idea about the importance of topic in the relationship between speaker and audience or persuader and persuadee. This model was structured by Gordon Wells (1981:69) who focused on examples of persuasive interaction. Even though he focused on a mother-child interaction, Cockcroft and Cockcroft (2005:37-39) see it as a “base line version of adult persuasive interaction”. (Cockcroft and Cockcroft 2005:37-39)

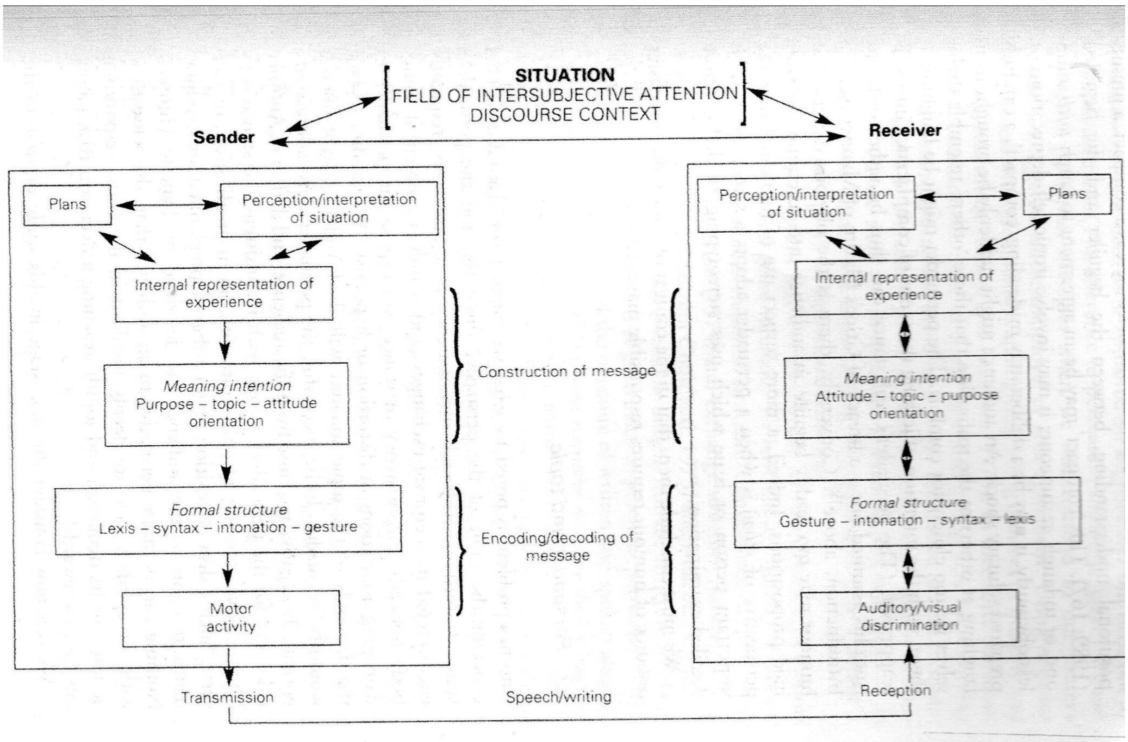


Figure 1. A model of communicative situation (Wells 1981 in Cockcroft and Cockcroft 2005:39)

The first thing that is noticeable is that the situations of *Sender* and *Receiver* are similar, the difference being the change in direction. The message of the interaction should be drawn from the context where sender and receiver have the same idea about the topic and idea of the conversation.

This figure can depict what happens in a second or two of the conversation but Wells (1981: 64) himself stated that it is unlikely that this could be one uni-directional model explaining the conversational situation as it exactly occurs. In a mother-child interaction a mother is likely to put effort into understanding what her child is trying to say, however, in a more problematic situation, i.e. in a debate in the general sense this would not be this straightforward. Namely the instances of misunderstanding, interruptions and questioning are likely to occur more often in a debate therefore the messages and the direction would change several times within the same context.

Cockcroft and Cockcroft (2005:38) also draw on Halliday´s theory of language function to form certain criteria that a speaker/persuader should keep in mind. Halliday stressed the importance of meaning as a key factor in functions of language, regardless of its realisations (lexis, grammar or phonology). He stated that there are multiple options available for a ´language user´ within systems of language (grammar, lexis, phonology). The audience, purpose and general context determine the choice of words within these options. Halliday offered a theory of three language metafunctions:

ideational, which means expressing ideas about the world.

interpersonal, which means dealing with social relationships.

textual, which means spoken or written realisation of various language choices. (Halliday 1973:36-42 in Cockcroft and Cockcroft 2005:21)

Cockcroft and Cockcroft (2005:38) connect *ideational* with *logos*, *interpersonal* with *ethos* and *pathos* and *textual* with *ethos*. These theories offer "theoretical support for the modern persuader in maintaining this essential balance". In a chapter about presentations these functions will be again referred to.

Within this chapter it was shown that language is part of society and that linguistic phenomena are also social phenomena. Now we will focus more closely on what determines and reproduces social structure according to Fairclough (2001:31) and in connection to this we will look more closely into what is exactly understood by *discourse*.

2.3. Discourse

Fairclough (2001:20) states that discourse usually involves conditions that can be specified as "*social conditions of production* and social conditions of interpretation." Later on, he claims that language is both a stake and a site in class struggle and that "those who exercise power through language must constantly be involved in struggle with others to defend (or lose) their position." (Fairclough 2001:29)

Social structures

$\Updownarrow$

Practice, discourse

Figure 2. Social structures and social practices (Fairclough 2001: 31)

"Discourse determines and reproduces social structure" in the same way as "social structures not only determine discourse, they are also a product of discourse." (Fairclough 2001:31) This means that discourse and social structure trigger one another and that through fulfilling certain social roles appropriate discourse comes into existence. Similarly certain discourse is appropriate for certain roles in social structure and through adopting this discourse one can be appropriately placed in a social structure. (Fairclough 2001:31) Or as Schiffrin (1994: 31) simply puts it "language and society constitute one another."
Stubbs´ (1983:1) definition of discourse is that it is "a language above the sentence or above the clause". While Van Dijk (1985:4) observes that "structural descriptions characterize discourse at several levels or dimensions of analysis and in terms of many different units, categories, schematic patterns or relations".

An assumption can be made following these two approaches and that is that presentations can also be seen as a discourse when it comes to categories, patterns and relations among people. Namely, presentations are mostly done by one person and in front of a group of people that varies in numbers. The setting, the purpose and the audience can be understood as a context for this kind of discourse. It is not only ´one-way´ since there is time for questions, comments and feedback. Naturally, the setting directs the way this kind of discourse progresses. As Fairclough claims "Discourse is a social practice […] and is a part of Pragmatics", (2001:7). Whereas:

> The main weakness of pragmatics from a critical point of view is it's individualism: ´action´ is thought of automatically as emanating from the individual and is often conceptualized in terms of the ´strategies´ adopted by the individual speaker to achieve her ´goals´ or ´intentions´: this understates the extent to which people are caught up in, constrained by, and indeed derive their individual identities from social conventions and gives the implausible impression that conventionalized ways of speaking or writing are ´reinvented´ on each occasion of their use by the speaker generating a suitable strategy for her particular goals. (Fairclough 2001:7-8)

What Fairclough states here is similar to what was previously mentioned and explained under *ethos* and *logos;* namely, deliberately choosing an appropriate register according to situation and audience.

Searle (1979:23) states that the number of things we do with language are limited. Speakers explain things, i.e. introduce a topic or the problem to the audience/listeners. The listeners on the other hand can be motivated to do something, while speakers express their feelings and attitudes. Hence it is possible to effect change by using language. (Searle 1979:23)

When these social structures and functions of language in human life are taken into consideration it can be assumed that presentations can be included into those functions as well. This also suggests that presentations are a form of discourse. In other words, when presentations are performed in a classroom or an office setting, there is already an established social structure with one or two super ordinate individuals and the rest then being subordinate. As a classroom setting or context is the focus here rather than an office setting this should briefly be elaborated on. In the situation where a presenter happens to be a student, the presenter is immediately classified as having a subordinate position where their presentation can be interrupted, corrected, questioned and criticized by which, according to Brown-Levinson´s (1987) theory of politeness, "his face is directly threatened". On the other hand, if a presenter is a teacher or any other high-ranking individual, this would put him in a superordinate position and his presentation would then less likely be interrupted or criticized in a negative way which would then, consequently, preserve his ´face´ in this form of discourse. It was Erwing Goffman who first realized the importance of ´face´ in conversation.

2.4. ´Face to face´ communication and politeness theory

Politeness theory initially began in 1967 with Erwing Goffman´s realization of the importance of ´face´. He differentiated between positive and negative face where the positive face reflects the need to be approved of and the negative face is the need not to be imposed on. (Goffman in Cockcroft and Cockcroft 2005:22-23, Schmatzer and Hardt-Mautner 1989: 58 and Quasthoff 1995:223)

Goffman (1967) did not analyze language itself but focused more on social interaction. Under the influence of several other sociologists and social psychologists he claimed that the ´self´ is an interactive construction. One way of understanding the ´self´ as a social construct is via the notion of ´face´, in other words:

> the positive social value a person effectively claims for himself by the line others assume he has taken during a particular contact […] something that is diffusely located in the flow of events in the encounter and becomes manifest only where these events are read and interpreted for the appraisals expressed in them. […] the maintenance of both self and face is built into the fabric of social interaction. (Goffman 1967a:5-12 in Schiffrin 1994:102)

The term interaction implies that there are more people involved in conversation, discussion and that there is an established speaker-listener relationship. Since we are dealing with physical and not virtual communication and interaction it is hence the face-to-face communication. There are norms that can be followed and rules that can be learned so that the communication or rather verbal interaction could function.

> A discourse strategy used to create either solidarity or discourse […] It has little inherent meaning in and of itself: it can be interpreted in either a positive sense as “chipping in” or in a negative sense as “butting in”. (Schiffrin 1994:103).

The former (“chipping in”) can be seen as an example of positive politeness according to Brown and Levinson; two people are connected to an extent that one can take the position of another in a conversation. The latter (“butting in”) may then be interpreted as an example of negative face violation; one speaker being so invasive that they are unable to let the other maintain their position within the conversation. (Brown and Levinson 1987 in Schiffrin 1994:109). “Thus speaking for another can be seen as either deferential or demeaning to the one being spoken for.” (Schiffrin 1994:109) In some instances this can be understood as the fact-threatening act as well even though by face-threatening acts we normally understand: orders, requests, suggestions, advice, threats, warnings, offers (pressure to accept or reject), criticism, disagreement, interruption, apologies and acceptance of such e.g. acceptance of gratitude or compliments. This list is, as it can be seen, fairly long, however, people tend to utter number of similar things regardless of the risk involved, i.e. damaging someone’s positive self-image. People tend to criticize, disagree, make requests, decline offers and so on, while at the same time try and preserve each other’s face. As Schmatzer and Hardt-Mautner (1989:60) stress:

“The function politeness has is to soften the negative impact of such face threatening acts” (Brown and Levinson 1987 in Schmatzer and Hardt-Mautner 1989: 58-60)

In sum, a conclusion can be made that as long as people know general principles of cooperative conversation and have the ability to to understand from context if not only what is being said, there should be no major obstacles for a conversation to be successful. This leads us to the issue of non-verbal communication.

2.5. Non-verbal communication in general

Mehrabian (2007), Ekman (1965,1969), Molcho (1985), Friesen and Hager (2002) are only a few among many scientists, psychologists and physiologists who devoted themselves to studies of non-verbal communication[1]. While Ekman, Friesen and Hager are among those who mostly studied facial expressions and their interpretation, Molcho and Mehrabian focused on the entire body and its voluntary and non-voluntary movements. Even though it would be rather interesting to discuss each of the studies the focus will be mainly on studies concerning the entire body.

Over many years there have been a number of studies conducted on human reactions or better said, gestural behaviour. Early attempts to note movement were not made in the field of psychology nor communication but in area or art, dancing, painting and sculpturing. Notations of this kind properly developed in works of Laban (1975) and Eshkol (1973). Laban described body movements in their relation to music, and in respect to different body areas and the direction of movement, together with force and energy aspect of movement. Eshkol on the other hand focused more movements in relation to the spheres of the body and angles of body joints in relation to these spheres (Laban and Eshkol in Quasthoff 1995:481).

Besides body movement and its description, throughout the history there was also a considerable development of facial expression description. Charles Lebrun (1969) created a set of drawings of affect displays and Rudolph (1903) compiled an atlas with drawings of emotional facial expressions. (Lebrun and Rudolph in Quasthoff 1995:481). Finally, a more medical approach was made by the French

[1] http://face-and-emotion.com

physiologist Duchenne (1862) who used skin electrodes in his research on prototypical emotional expressions. His work had influenced Darwin´s (1872) theory of emotional expressions. Darwin stated that during our evolutional development certain facial expression got more specific communicative function. Namely, in a much undeveloped stage of human society wrinkling nose, narrowed eyes and even barred teeth signified, disgust, caution, anger on unpleasantness. Those were the signals used before speech developed; still certain facial expressions remained despite the existence of supporting words. (Darwin in Krauss, Chen and Chawla 1996:2)

Ekman and Friesen (1969 in Mehrabian 2007:3, 1978 in Quasthoff 1995:482) propose five categories of non-verbal behaviour:

Emblems which stand for all smaller gestures that can easily be interpreted into words, e.g. smile, frown, handshake. They have culturally predefined meaning and that is why are they easy to interpret into words.

Illustrators are an important part of speech. They are movements which accompany, illustrate or stress the verbal content. They are used to emphasize, e.g. point with a turn of the head or by hand.

Affect display represent "primary affects"; they indicate one person's mood to another person (happiness, anger, surprise, fear, disgust, sadness and interest) and combinations of the same affects.

Regulators are smaller signs which are used to regulate and structure interaction in a way. For example when wanting to initiate or end a speech in social situation.

Adapters or manipulators are body movements; moving into a more comfortable position, scratching and so on.

Ekman and Friesen use these categories in body movement notation and analysis. Mahl (1968), Rosenfeld (1966) and Freedman (1973) made several similar distinctions but the most important is the distinction between object-focused hand movement (illustrator) and body-focused hand movement (manipulator). (Quasthoff 1995:484) Body-focused movement means the hand movements directed towards one´s body or towards oneself and not towards the listener or object. Mehrabian (1972) on the other hand suggested a system for coding body posture and body orientation. Body orientation is coded together with the head orientation and movement, towards and away from the partner in conversation. Body posture shows closeness or distance, according to whether the speaker/listener's upper body is oriented towards or away from the person the utterance is directed towards. (Mehrabian in Quasthoff 1995:484) This will be again mentioned and elaborated on later in Chapter 3 with regards to public speaking.

Over the years there has also been an attempt to develop and constantly improve various techniques that would allow monitoring and noting the movement of facial muscles and tissues so that they could be noticed more easily than with just the eye and hence be easily and more accurately described. One of these techniques is electromyographic (EMG) technique. Nevertheless, even though this technique offers a more detailed description it is obtrusive when used in simple communication research and hence it is scarcely used. Several other techniques rely simply on the observer's eye where interactions are analysed by using video or film records since they allow repeated watching and controlling of the analysis.

Currently the most frequently used system is the one developed by Ekman and Friesen (1978) called the Facial Action Coding System (FACS). (Ekman and Friesen in Quasthoff 1995:483 and see footnote on pg.20)

Non-verbal communication refers to all gestures, mimics and the smallest movements one might make and which, to a careful observer, might offer more insight into what exactly goes on in one's mind. In other words, the brain reacts and sends those signals to the rest of the body without control. Those reactions might be defensive, offensive, relaxing, affirmative, accusative, panic and so on.

Scherer (1977:275-297 in Quasthoff 1995:311-313) claims that the functions of non-verbal in terms of verbal can be classified into three categories: parasyntactic, parasemantic and parapragmatic. The first category is related to the structure of the speech flow, it makes the speech flow more understandable (emphasis, stress, intonation, pause). Parasemantic on the other hand produces relations to and with the signs they refer to (substitution, complementation, neutralisation and contradiction). Finally, parapragmatic functions have two different possibilites: a) non-verbal signs that refer to the speaker, the listener and the interaction between them; b) the non-verbal sign that indicates turn-taking moment. In the first case the non-verbal signs may refer to the expressions made by the speaker, the reactions of the listener and mark the process of interaction. (Scherer 1977:275-297 in Quasthoff 1995:311-313)

These methods in the field of non-verbal communication are important to mention simply to stress how important non-verbal communication in fact is. Even though the use of techniques such as FACS or EMG is unnecessary for this paper it might be of more use to know of these techniques for some further research in this field.

As far as the categories in non-verbal behaviour are concerned they can be applied in general every-day communication as well as in presentations. Once we are aware of their classification it is easier to recognize them or even use them more consciously.

3. Presentations- what the experts say

As mentioned earlier the art of public speaking and presenting dates from Greek and Roman societies and is still undergoing some development. It comes as no surprise that numerous books have been written by communication and presentation experts over the course of time. There are many people that only present themselves as experts offer their advice as well. Differentiating between actual experts and self-proclaimed ones is not always easy. One relies on references, acknowledgements, experience and natural accomplishments. People whose advice and experience will be mentioned here have all devoted a respectable number of years to accumulating and developing skills within social sciences and communications. One of them is Daniela Zeller (2009) who wrote *So Werden Sie Gehört* (How to be Heard) offering a substantial amount of advice on public speaking techniques starting firstly with the ´definition´ of a good speaker.

Additionally to this, she claims that a good speaker does not have to be perfect and that with exercise everyone can be a good speaker. It might happen that a speaker forgets some things, or drops papers- one thing a speaker should however not do is to bore the audience. Since no one was born perfect there is always time to learn and practice things we want to master; especially when it comes to public speaking. In conveying a message it is of a greater value *how* we say things than *what* we say (2009:8-9). The way we speak; we present something is what remains memorable. Naturally, if while preparing our speech we pay closer attention to appliance of *ethos*, *pathos* and *logos* both *how* and *what* of we say will be remarkable and memorable enough. Koegel (2007:20) says that “how the word is spoken can dramatically impact the power of the spoken word”. In order to speak powerfully and effectively one has to firstly organize one’s speech. This can be achieved through developing a structure, framing the objective and gathering all relevant material.

This immediately makes us consider what it is that we focus the most on when preparing a speech. The content is usually the main focus, while we tend to slightly neglect the other aspects of our performance. It is easier to remember and connect things if there is something visual related to received information. This might be a picture, gesture an anecdote; naturally it should be in correlation with the information, with the message one is trying to get across.

Parallel to Zeller (2009), Koegel (2007) also claims that everyone can become an exceptional presenter with effort and exercise. One has to be organized, passionate, engaging and natural. In addition, one should understand one's audience and practice. "Step one is to open up and own the room" (2007:2-5), meaning that one has to have absolute confidence when walking about the room. One's posture is the primary thing the audience notices and forms first impressions upon. Confidence in posture implies having something constructive, important to share and is likely to attract attention. Similarly, insecurity and even fearfulness might only trigger negative reactions, frequent interruptions or even the complete loss of attention.

3.1. Anxiety

Fears usually come from people's belief that they cannot do something when it comes to public speaking. The fact is that people never know their abilities unless they try doing something. Claiming that one is incapable of freely standing and presenting in front of an audience without trying that before does not make sense. The least that can be done is to practice in order to seem more self-confident.

Thoughts are in close relation to body posture and movement. If we let our shoulders down, lower our chin to our chest, slouch or shift from one leg to another it will immediately make us feel insecure, vulnerable and weak. Moreover, we will start acting like that as well. Whilst doing the opposite, chest out, chin up, firm posture on both feet will allow us to breathe more deeply which consequently brings more oxygen to our brain and triggers more endorphin release, as a result. We will then feel and seem more confident and thus we will act and speak accordingly. (Zeller, 2009:17:19) Many other writers, besides Zeller, describe a kind of body posture which they perceive as the most optimal posture for stability of one’s body, self assurance and the posture that will allow speakers more air flow and stronger voice. One of those writers is Molcho (1985:74) who says that only when people are standing without too much muscular effort is their body in equilibrium. Hands are loose, next to the body, eyes focusing to the front, head and neck should be in a line. Furthermore, the space between the feet should be equal to the width of the hips. Finally, this should help establish a flexible but firm connection to the ground and allow our energy to flow through our muscles down our body.

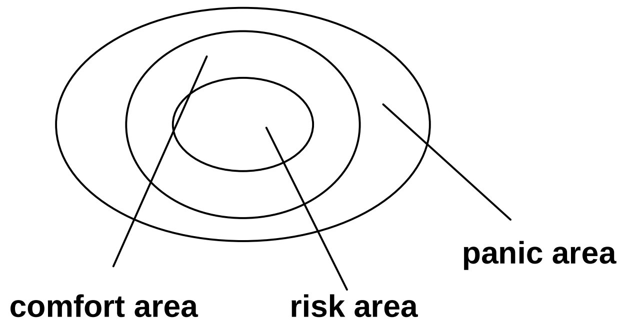
What Molcho described here is, in his words, the perfect posture where the body is ´in harmony with the world´. Meaning that after assuming that position our body and mind should be in sync and that it is a primary position before starting our talk. It is the same posture that was advised by F.M. Alexander until his death and practitioners’ of his technique after his death. The same posture is nowadays being taught and practised in rhetoric classes, courses on Neuro-linguistic Programming (NLP) and many others dealing with public speaking and public appearance in general. As mentioned in the introduction several of these courses were attended during gathering of the data therefore the experience of teachings is personal.

According to Zeller (2009:16-17) the biggest problem most people face when it comes to speaking is the fear of actually doing it. A survey that she conducted showed that on average a man experiences fear of standing up and speaking more often than a woman does. This fear incorporates a fear of failure, of not being listened to, embarrassment, judgment, missing the audience’s expectations, eye contact, questions, and mistakes and many other reasons.

Monarth and Kase (2007) wrote about fear, anxiety and means to control it in order to become a confident speaker. They identify themselves with their audience and everyone else by saying that situations in which people are overcome by fear are common for everyone. Fear of speaking in public is very common. However hardly anyone devotes enough time to the explanation of what is the reason behind it. One of the reasons could be the fear of speaking in public as such or making mistakes while speaking. Shy and introvert people are

more likely to experience anxiety and nervousness before having to speak in public. Regardless of being introvert or extrovert, avoiding situations that trigger anxiety will not relieve one of feeling anxious, it would only give anxiety strength and increase likelihood of it occurring again, whenever a similar situation occurs. Usual response is trying to think how to get out of the given situation as quickly as possible, coming to terms with or predicting other people's judgment and generally perceiving oneself as a failure. (Monarth and Kase 2007:15)
Monarth and Kase (2007:15) refer to Aaron Beck who was "known by many as the father of cognitive therapy." He studied the type of thinking that occurs with anxiety and has written about it extensively. His research has shown that when being faced with fear, in this case public speaking, people are often influenced by their negative thoughts and convictions that they are either going to say something nonsensical or ridicule themselves in some other way. This way of thinking is influenced by emotions and it is less rational then thinking without being influenced by anxiety. Anxiety can easily be triggered and then thoughts will evidently become even less rational and more emotional.

Zeller (2009:25) presents a scheme of three areas which she uses to explain how we function in different situations:



Comfort area is the one where a person feels most secure, most relaxed and used to the situation one is in; it does not cause any further thought or stress. The risk area is where new challenges await. Finally, the panic area is where one fights for survival; it is the area of new discoveries and developments. It is not healthy to be in this area too often as it can jeopardize our inner harmony. Anxious feelings if ignored place one immediately into the panic area; nevertheless, if irrational fears such as fear of public speaking are confronted and dealt with, one will with time move through the risk area into the comfort zone. One would find oneself in the risk area while facing the fears and in the comfort area when habituation and rationality take place. The way of successfully moving from the panic area into the comfort zone is to prepare oneself for situations that one dislikes and avoids, to note what it is that one is most afraid of and what it is that one tries to avoid and to come up with a plan:

- admitting fears
- questioning how realistic they are
- plan of action. (Zeller, 2009:26)

In any case we should avoid placing ourselves in a martyr or victim position but rather try and assume the role of decision maker. (Zeller, 2009:27)
Tendency to respond in an anxious manner can be genetic or inborn. Observing people around us and their reactions to different situations during our first years of life offers us the pattern of behaviour that we are likely to learn and adopt later in life. As children we learn by observing and if we observe other people's anxious, nervous reactions it is only natural that we will adopt them similarly as we adopt many other habits that way. On the other hand, different life experiences leave different traces on our behaviour. Therefore, if we are in an unknown situation that might cause us to be nervous and in the end it proves that our nervous state was justified (if we fail in something and are mocked for it) it is likely that this nervousness will occur again (Monarth and Kase, 2007:1-10).
The typical behavioural response is usually trying to avoid the feared situation or to get out of there as soon as possible. One might even try to overcompensate by trying to hide one's nervousness and anxiety; however that will only make it worse, as previously mentioned. (Monarth and Kase 2007:17-18) Anxiety increases if the reason for its occurrence is being avoided and not properly dealt

with. By avoiding a particular situation that causes anxiety, in this case presenting, one does not relieve oneself of the problem. The solution is only temporary and when the next similar occasion approaches there will already be two reasons for anxiety, one is the same- presenting, and the other is likely to be consideration of avoiding it again. Monarth and Kase (2007) stated that the best way to overcome fear and anxiety is to face it. One cannot fail anyone but oneself and a way to avoid that is to prepare well. (Zeller, 2009:17-18) One of the ways of preparation is to picture every possible situation from laughter emerging in the audience to accidentally dropping papers or experiencing short black-outs. If papers have been dropped they should simply be picked up and the speech continued. Addressing the audience and asking for their opinion might be useful in case of confusion or even forgetting something. Finally, even if the audience reacts with laughter it does not necessarily mean that it is a mocking laugh. Namely, the audience is there to listen and many members of that audience might be relieved with the fact that they do not have to assume the role of the speaker. It is not very likely that the entire audience will be hostile. One has to keep their attention, make them listen and present oneself in an amiable, professional and positive light. This starts from the very moment one stands on the podium. (Zeller, 2009:17:19)

In addition if the audience notices anxious behaviour it is more likely that the response will be sympathy rather than hostility. Even if it is the case of a classroom full of teenagers, they might be less judgmental since they will eventually have to do some presentation themselves in the same class. Finally, the audience should not be perceived as anything else than it is, namely an audience that is there to listen and possibly learn depending on the quality of our information.

Practicing and rehearsing in order to reduce the anxiety is good but it should not be overdone either. Not everything has to be memorized by heart and spoken automatically since this takes away our enthusiasm about, and interest in, the topic. Reading the entire text out loud is also something that should be avoided because it offers only false sense of security and our presentation/talk will be a failure.

Furthermore, when practicing for the speech one should not “negatively scrutinize” oneself. (Monarth and Kase, 2007:83) There will be things to work on, but mental rehearsal should be used to practice positively. One should not be too critical towards oneself or use mental rehearsal for overcompensating, avoiding behaviour.

Certain situations trigger anxiety easily. According to (Monarth and Kase, 2007:84) the way army pilots prepare themselves before taking off and doing drills. By the time they fly they have already gone through all possible situations and actions that they will or might have to undertake. They do this exercise either alone or in groups. Therefore, hardly anything can happen that they have not thought of before. While doing this, it is likely that any existing anxiety will be reduced. With time one gets used to the feeling of anxiety and one’s body has had enough time to go through habituation, i.e. the processing of that anxiety and the realistic reasoning of it. For this reason exactly it is not a good idea to avoid situations that cause anxiety. Additionally, breathing properly while preparing or presenting is extremely important. Taking in short, rapid breaths trigger a rapid heart rate and then the body starts sending alarming signals to one’s brain. This is the way one usually breathes when one thinks one is in danger and the body is capable of recognizing it. Taking in slow, deep breaths through the nose, down to the stomach, activating diaphragm and letting it out through the mouth is the best way to calm oneself down. This can be practiced by putting a palm of one’s hand on one’s stomach and feeling the air properly coming in and going out. (Monarth and Kase, 2007:87-100)

Getting to know, or being aware of our abilities will be helpful when it comes to decision making. We are all unique and moved by different things. Being aware of it and showing it openly is the only way others can acknowledge and notice it. That is why it is not the best idea to have a role-model, unless it is only used as a means for inspiration for other techniques. Anything else would be too much. We can never stand up, talk and behave exactly like someone we admire. This also applies to dressing up or preparing notes or cards. We all have our own schemes and ways of writing, copying someone else’s style might only confuse us.

3.2. Preparation and Organization

Schmatzer and Mautner (1989:127-151), Reynolds (2008), Weismann (2006, 2007), Monarth and Kase (2007), Koegel (2007) and many others put the preparation of presentations as the top priority. Preparation here implies collecting ideas, all information concerning the topic, making notes, arranging ideas and focusing on the purpose of the presentation. When preparing a presentation three areas have to be considered and covered: verbal, non-verbal and questions/answers. In case the preference is to have the Q/A at the end, that should be made clear to the audience. In this way possible interruptions would be avoided. (Monarth and Kase, 2007:82-83)

The purpose of a speech or presentation can be to persuade, explain, inform or inspire, as mentioned earlier in Chapter 2.

Finding our objective leads to organization. Reynolds (2008) strongly supports the idea of stepping away from the computer while going through the organizational part. His point is that all ideas should be sketched, put down on paper and arranged according to which ideas go together. He refers to this phase as ´brainstorming´ while Weismann (2006) calls it ´data dump´. Weismann claims that essentially there are no bad ideas; those that are not relevant can be replaced later. The next step is organizing those ideas into ´roman columns´, i.e. choosing the main points and sub points, whilst always keeping in mind why something should be significant or interesting to the addressees. Or as Monarth and Kase (2007) state that the audience is the primary and the goal of presentation is to deliver a message to them. That is what has to be held in mind throughout preparation. What is it that they know? How much? Who are they? What do they expect? What is new? What is their attitude towards the speaker/topic? What do they hope to get out of that topic? (Monarth and Kase, 2007:108-109)

Koegel (2007:32) presents a “longstanding presentation structure” as follows:

- Tell them what you are going to tell them (opening)
- Tell them (body)
- Tell them what you just told them (closure)

This is also very helpful with organizing the points and sub points in proper order. Schmatzer and Mautner claim that the following step after having collected and arranged the arguments is to form an outline of the presentation. A standard outline consists of:

- **Introduction**
- **Body**
- **First point**
  - argument
    - supporting material
    - supporting material
  - argument
    - supporting material
    - supporting material
  - argument
    - supporting material
    - supporting material
    -
- **Second point**
  - supporting argument/material
  - supporting argument/material
- **Third point**
  - supporting argument/material
  - supporting argument/material
- **Closing** –summing up the introduction, points and conclusions. (Schmatzer and Mautner, 1989:131)

Naturally, arguments opposing our hypothesis have to be considered and appropriate answers or arguments should also be prepared. Arguments confirming our hypothesis have to be interesting to the audience and should not simply be general knowledge. Secondly, they have to be current and not outdated, coming from an appropriate source; which also means that they have to be valid and reliable as well as relevant to the point they support. Besides the purpose of the presentation, we should consider the knowledge our audience already has about the topic-if any.

The focus of this paper is on student oral presentations, in a classroom setting, therefore it is to be expected that by the time students get their chance to do a presentation in front of a class they are usually more or less already acquainted with one another as well as with the general topic of the course at least. Whether some want to accept it or not we form our opinions on other people rather quickly. In other words, it is very likely that by the time presenter takes the floor the rest of the class has some opinion or attitude towards him/her. Naturally, this does not have to be a negative one, however, it happens. One might successfully confront that by using pleasant facial expressions, establishing eye contact with the entire class and assuming an upright position. Usually people react to a pleasant face with a pleasant face or at least openness to listening. In addition, if the eye contact is made with the entire class every single individual will feel addressed once the presentation starts. The same goes for closing words, i.e. conclusions.

There are no rules as to the number of points. Schmatzer and Mautner (1989:131) claim that there should be a minimum of two while Monarth and Kase claim that three is the magic number.

> The average audience of adults typically processes three key points fairly well … so three is the magic number. If you have more than three major thoughts to share, be sure to keep the sub points to three. (Monarth and Kase 2007:50-56)

Reynolds (2008) and Weismann (2006) also claim that there should be three main points, and if necessary there can be several sub points as well. The number of sub-points can also vary but if there is one a second one should follow. They should be "brief and relevant" (Schmatzer and Mautner, 1989:131).

Many experts agree that the body should be prepared first and that introduction and conclusion should follow. Organizing points and arguments is the most complicated and time consuming part of the presentation. However, the opening is the key part of the presentation since it has to get the audience’s attention, inform them about the topic, and establish a shared position or “common ground” with them, as mentioned in Chapter 2 under Rhetoric. Naturally, it should also serve as an introduction to the body of the presentation. (Schmatzer and Mautner, 1989:134)

One should be able to shorten a good presentation or argument to even a minute. If the points are supported with valid arguments the presentation can always be extended. Reynolds (2008:64) calls this the ´elevator test´, i.e. being able to sell one’s story or ideas within a minute or less, that is how long it takes to reach the ground floor from the fifth floor in an elevator. If the research has been done, ideas and points thought through there should be no problem in choosing a central point or the ´take home message´, again with having addressee’s interest in mind and shortening a presentation down to a minimal amount of time. Similarly, every presentation can be put into 20 or 30 minutes, since if the preparation has been done properly, ideas and supporting arguments are there and they can be discussed.

A speaker might decide to make note cards with key words or main points. They should be well organized, with a little information and numbered in case a speaker drops them. (Schmatzer and Mautner, 1989:132)

Koegel (2007) claims that in order to be able to put every 20 minute presentation into a 2 minute five simple steps should be followed:

- Stating the purpose
- Stating the objective/goal
- Clarifying the current situation or issues
- Predicting the end result or benefits
- Stating the action plan or time line. (Koegel, 2007:34-38)

According to Koegel, the average “individual attention span” (2007:32) is 15-30 seconds. Therefore one has to regain that attention all over again constantly and not allow listener’s thoughts to drift away. That is why the message has to be short, relevant and focused. Reynolds (2008) supports this statement by saying that three words should be kept in mind "simplicity, clarity and brevity" (2008:43). Furthermore, in order to know when you are supposed to regain audience's attention you need to observe them and read into their movements and eye contact. Once the attention from the audience is there it should be kept and one of the ways to do that is by engaging personal emotions, passion and enthusiasm about the topic. If we appear interested and positive about something it is likely to spread out and affect everyone around us. Our passion should be followed or enhanced by our body language, eye contact, facial expressions, voice and gestures. "Passionate presenters are more persuasive." (Koegel 2007:44).

Kogel (2007:44) points out that while opening, one should make sure one has captured the attention of the audience and that they should be motivated enough to want to listen until the end of the talk. Monarth and Kase claim even though the body is important because it contains points and arguments it is the opening and even more the ending that have the strongest impact. These should be the points one concentrates most on as in this area one gets and regain the audience's attention. (2007:57) Monarth and Kase (2007:79) say that:

> The beginning or the opening of your talk is like the opening ceremony at the Olympic Games, It is designed to wet your audience's appetite and get them interested in what is to come. It gets their attention and makes them sit up. It has to be designed to be more than just a loud bang that makes you look. A beginning has to be relevant. It must somehow lead to the points you will make in the body of your talk.

Finally, if the opening was good and the body well organized, then closing should present itself easily and have a logical flow. It is where all the main points should be repeated and arguments simply summed up. Eventually one final point could be added. This point would be something new, that the audience has not heard before and is most likely to be the take-home message to them.

According to Schmatzer and Mautner (1989:134) good ways to open, or to start presentations are:

- startling questions
- challenging statements
- appropriate quotations

- illustrations, stories or anecdotes
- showing appropriate objects or pictures
- generalisations that are attention grabbing.

Koegel (2007:44) mentions the same points and adds statistics, current news or predictions to the list. Monarth and Kase agree that an anecdote, startling fact, demonstration or a rhetorical question are good as long as they are relevant while jokes should be avoided. The one opening that takes most courage or energy is to simply stand and look at the audience waiting for them to calm down and get interested in what you have to say. (Monarth and Kase, 2007:79-80)

What one should, however, not do is to apologize, tell a story unrelated to the topic, ask questions that have no connection to the presentation, drag the opening on or flatter the audience.

The climax of the presentation is its conclusion, because that is where the ´take-home message´ is, i.e. what the audience will most likely remember the longest. It should be short, concise, powerful, connected to the introduction and have a clear message as a result of all the arguments previously mentioned in the body. It should not be sudden or abrupt but more like a smooth transition from the body of the presentation. Good ways to conclude would be:

- sum up all the points mentioned
- call for action, show a picture
- tell a story
- offer a challenge and future ideas or prospects.
  (Schmatzer and Mautner (1989:134)

Objectives that should be achieved by the end of our presentation are that the audience has understood what we meant, that they have been paying attention and will remember what has been said. As Koegel (2007:44) pointed out, we have to clarify what is it that we want to say as well as the purpose and the final goal of our talk seen from the present state with predicting the future events, successful or not depending on whether the proposed action plan will be followed or not. The end has to be strong, effective and motivating. The listener's take-home message should be clear and simple. If dealing with problems and proposals the result should be that they would want to do something about it as soon as possible.

Final aspect in preparation is the language aspect where it should be mentioned that pronunciation should be clear and neutral so that everyone can understand properly. Idioms, metaphors and allusions should therefore be avoided if possible, due to any misinterpretations they might cause (see Chapter 4 on Rhetoric) Similarly, slang and generalisations ("all is great") should be omitted, or avoided. Schmatzer and Mautner (1989:140)

3.3. Question/Answer section

Either during a presentation or after it some people might ask questions or inquire about more information. Those questions, however, can sometimes turn out to be rather hostile and provocative. According to Weissman (2007:15) it might be that during our presentation we argue or inform expecting our audience to accept our point of view and arguments which then might result in audience asking questions or for more clarification. Since no one changes easily the ground has to be thoroughly questioned first. In this case the speaker *is* the ground. (see pg.39. chapter on Non-verbal communication)

Weissman (2007) compares the Q/A section of a presentation to martial arts were the speaker has to be concentrated, balanced, quick, ready for self defence, discipline and strong self-control. The main point is in fact the control; control of the question, answer, audience, time and ourselves. Naturally, different people react differently when being asked a question. Some become defensive, some evasive. Nevertheless, the speaker that shows negative behaviour also leaves a negative impression on the audience. This goes for all communicative situations especially within the media. The speaker has to be the one in control when it comes to Q/A. Weissman (2007:17)

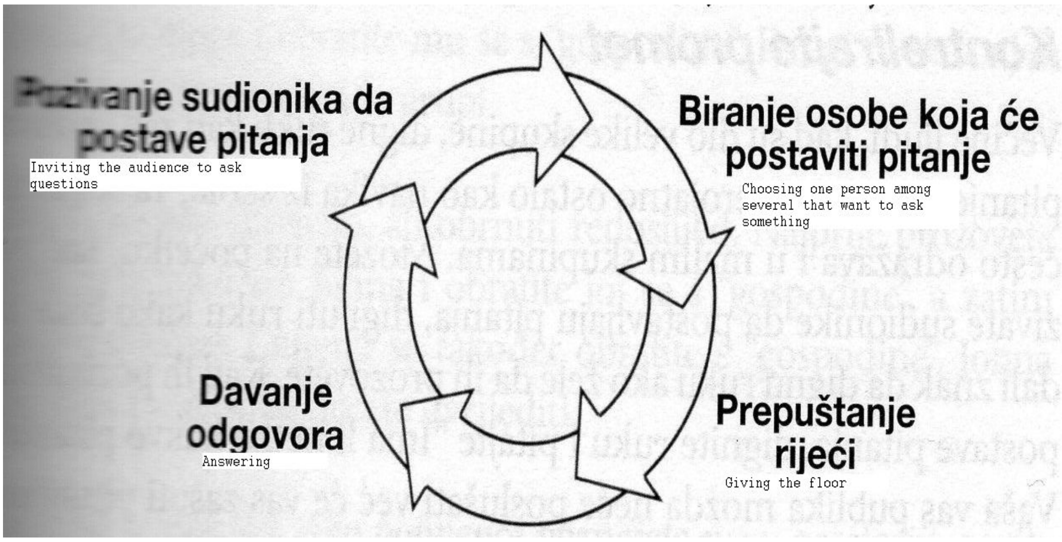


Figure 3. Cycle of questions and answers (Weissman 2007:17)

What Weissman tried to represent with this cycle is how circular the Q/A section should in fact be presuming that the speaker follows the hands on a clock while speaking. In other words, through this cycle of questions and answers Weissman tried to explain what a successful Q/A section look like. Firstly, the speaker invites the audience to ask questions. Secondly, he/she chooses the person from the audience, in case there is more than one question. What follows is giving the floor to that person and reassuming it again to give an answer. As the next step, the speaker might choose another person from the audience to ask a question and so the cycle would begin again. The entire time, the speaker should be the one in control, choosing the time for questions, the people that would ask them, then giving an answer and moving on to another question.

When choosing a person that would ask a question he/she should be pointed out by an open palm, open hand and never by pointing a finger. Again, what is very important is to establish the eye-contact with that person and listen to the question. In order to enhance attention and show that we are genuinely interested in what this person wants to ask or comment, we might make a step towards them while still looking them directly in the eye. This shows our full devotion and their exclusion as an individual from the group. This is likely to result in positive reactions and affirmations. (Weissman 2007:25)

Weissman gives an example of the presidential debate between George H. Bush, Bill Clinton and Ross Perot on 15.10.1992 where Bush was looking at his watch while the question was being asked which resulted in his absolutely nonsensical response. While the question was repeated he was still not paying any attention while Clinton did. Clinton stepped forward, towards the woman asking the question, addressing only her and giving a rather personal response. This debate resulted in increase of Clinton's supporters by 17%. Consequently, several years after this the possibility of asking questions during presidential debate was abolished. (Weissman 2007:31)

Active listening requires concentration. One should pay attention to the key words in question and if one is unsure that one understood something correctly then one should simply ask for repetition; however, when repeating or rephrasing questions negative words should be omitted as much as possible. Words like "not", "did not", "never" should be replaced with "did it?", "ever" and so on as those are the words likely to result in positive responses. Additionally, when paraphrasing the number of words should be reduced to a minimum.

The complete question should be listened to carefully because the key word or issue might be at the very end. Hence if a speaker rushes into answering the point might easily be missed. Answers should be as direct and honest as possible. On the other hand, if the answer cannot be given then the audience has to be provided with a reason or explanation. This will show engagement and willingness to answer, therefore the response coming from the audience is likely to be that they sympathetically accept all our responses. (Weissman 2007:31-96)

What Weissman suggests here is based on personal experience and analysis of different real-life situations, mainly political debates where both politicians and audience were observed.

3.4. Non-verbal Communication in presentations

Some studies of non-verbal communication have already been mentioned (see pg.20). Since non-verbal communication is a very important part of presentations some aspects need to be introduced and some mentioned again (body-movement). The aspects of non-verbal communication that will be considered here are: voice, eye-contact, body movement and facial expressions as well as visual aids and their usage.

3.4.1. Voice

Voice is a very important aspect of verbal communication that demands constant working on and absolute awareness of. It is our instrument, as Zeller (2009:47) puts it, and it needs taking care of. Taking care of the voice includes taking care of the entire body, of feelings, spirit and physical objects around. Listening to one's body and the messages it sends, taking one's feelings into consideration and not ignoring them, being aware of where one is; those are all aspects that need to be taken into account when it comes to voice. People would, consequently, sound sad, annoyed, agitated, secure, insecure, lost and happy-all depending on what was mentioned above. Naturally, breathing plays a very important role concerning both our posture and voice; whether one's voice will have its full strength and clarity or not depends considerably on posture and proper breathing. Descriptions of postures that are considered recommendable were mentioned (see pg.26).

Koegel (2007:87) states that the voice has to be interesting, enthusiastic and energetic in order to get and maintain attention. One should speak up but not yell. Additionally, the range of voice should be expanded, monotony makes the audience drift away and it will only get more difficult to regain their attention.

Breath, voice and clarity can be improved through practice and exercising. There are examples of such exercises (Zeller 2009:48-57):

Breathing: assume a good contact with the ground. Relax your knees. Put one hand on your lower stomach, and as you breathe in let the air come to the area where your hand is. Do not force your breathing, but relax. As you breathe out try to form an “f” or “s” sound. Breathe out as little as possible!

This is an exercise for proper relaxing breathing which helps in any kind of stressful situation.

Voice: lower your chin to your chest and while raising your head back up let the "o" sound out. At one point you should notice that your voice has reached its maximal strength and clarity. Remember that position and try reassuming it every time you speak.

Besides these there are few other exercises that involve facial muscle relaxation or the so called lip-flattering, i.e. saying "brrrrr" by letting your lips vibrate. No pressure should be involved in this exercise. (Zeller, 2009:48-57)

3.4.2. Eye-contact

Eye-contact is also a highly esteemed and important aspect of non-verbal communication. Koegel (2007:98) calls it "an essential engagement tool." It does not take too long to establish this sort of connection with someone, namely, 3-5 seconds are usually enough to give a listener the feeling that he/she was being addressed or noticed.

Additionally, the eyes of the audience will show whether the speaker is being listened to, approved of or disagreed with. When asking a question, the speaker should always look the addressee directly in the eyes and in an encouraging way. Any emotional state that a speaker might try to conceal is likely to be shown by eye-movement. (Zeller 2009, 100-104) Mehrabian (2007:21-23) similarly states that eye-contact can serve as an indicator of more personal feelings such as love, respect, fear of or shame. He refers to several of his studies which showed relationship between eye-contact and proximity in which he discovered that as the distance between an addressee and a speaker decreases so does the eye-contact, in other words, eye-contact is more direct and frequent the further apart the speaker and his/her audience are. However, as closeness increases the eye contact decreases.

If the audience consists of a smaller group then the eye-contact should not be difficult to establish. However, if a group is larger, the room will consequently be bigger. In this case the *M-W* rule could be used. A speaker should ´form´ a capital letter *M* with his eyes across the audience starting from the last seat in first row on his left hand side and finishing with the last seat on his right hand side. The speaker should then direct his eyes towards the upper right corner, i.e. the last seat which is then the starting point for the capital letter *W. W* should end at the upper left hand side corner, i.e. last seat in the last row. This way all listeners will get the feeling that the attention was at some point directed at them alone. (Learned at the *Bildungsforum*).

As far as the audience reception is concerned Monarth and Kase (2007) and Koegel (2007) generally agree on these signals:

Affirmative audience:
Nodding head – I agree, I understand
Sustained eye contact – I am following you
Sitting up/leaning forward – I am interested, tell me more
Smiling – Engaged, enjoying the information
Laughing at subtle humour – Tuned in
Comments and questions – I want to be involved
Taking notes – Eager to learn and remember
Relaxed posture – Comfortable, open to information.

Inattentive or bored audience:
Sparse eye contact – Interest is waning
Head held up by hands – Bored, tired
Rubbing eyes – Ready to move on
Shifting in seat, fidgeting – Mentally moving on
Yawns – Tired, bored or nervous
Arms and legs crossed – Closed off, not buying it
Head and eyes down – mentally somewhere else
Picking lint off clothes – This is getting tedious
Eyes wondering around room – Tell me something new
Blank stare – Day dreaming. (Koegel, 2007:115-116)

3.4.3. Movement/Body language

The body can be the speaker's best friend or worst enemy when it comes to non-verbal communication and getting the message across. People use well thought of, and appropriate words and sentences in order to communicate but the body sometimes does not follow with gestures. Being aware of them and controlling them can be achieved through very little exercise. By first observing other people's gestures in everyday situations and analyzing them, one's own self-analysis of one's gestures is triggered. After a while one becomes constantly aware of those gestures, be it at a casual dinner with friends or any other situation. One can either let the body follow one's thoughts or prevent that happening and work on alterations of those thoughts and perceptions- according to other people actions or situations. Simply by limiting and marking personal space people will manage to act respectfully and professionally even when working with others that they might not think highly of or in situations that are not considered to be most comfortable. (Zeller, 2009:63-79) In other words, being aware of one's own personal space and the space of others as well as using it accordingly is helpful when wanting to seem and act professionally.

Mehrabian (2007:24) states that depending on the "degree to which a communicator's shoulders and legs are turned in the direction of, rather than away from, his addressee can serve as a measure of his status or of his liking of the addressee". In a study conducted by Machotka (1965 in Mehrabian 2007:24) subjects were asked to rate openness of arms of nude female figures. The study showed that crossed closed-arm positions were more likely to be seen as cold and passive rather than warm, welcoming and accepting as it was the case with moderately or entirely open-arm positions. Subjects preferred moderate open-arm positions rather than entirely closed or open positions. This study focused on rating perception of closed/open-arm positions generally, regardless of the fact that hands were of nude female figures. An assumption could be made that closed/open-arm position would be similarly perceived when it comes to business people, i.e. people in suits, or students.

Koegel (2007) and Zeller (2009) both state that the perfect, effective body position would be with raised chin, straightened shoulders, hands down the body signalling confidence, relaxation and openness (Koegel, 2007:59; Zeller, 2009:63) (see pg.26). Policemen are trained to deal with potentially dangerous or confrontational situations with their hands at their sides. This way they appear to be in complete command of the situation. However, remaining for long in that position might lead to stiffness, therefore gesticulation should take place as well. (Kogel, 2007:60)

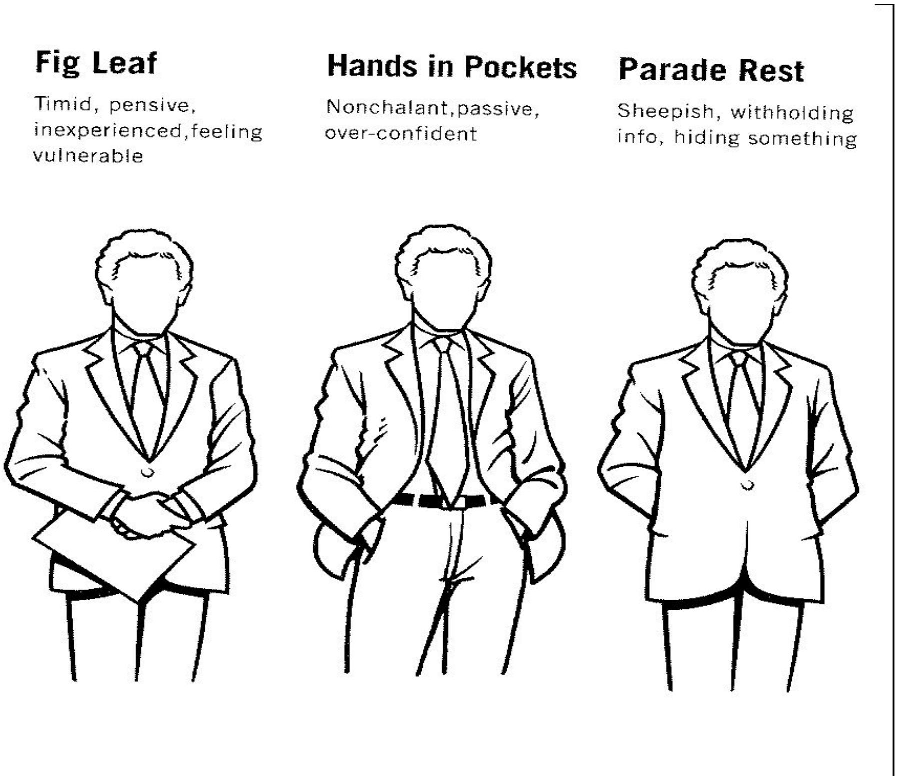


Figure 4.taken from Koegel (2007:64-65) with approval

What Koegel (2007:64-65) is trying to show here and with the following figure are examples of what positions should one avoid. Position one on the first picture is the one that he calls ´fig leaf´ and represents a man with arms crossed at the front of his body. This posture is characterised as non positive as the person seems as Koegel states "timid, pensive, inexperienced, feeling vulnerable". Second position ´hand in pockets´ is generally characterised as impolite or as Koegel says "nonchalant, passive, over-confident". Third position is the ´parade rest´ represents a man hiding his hands behind his back which is seen as "sheepish, withholding info, hiding something".

The second illustration shows two positions, ´hands on hips´ and ´arms crossed´ both of which should be avoided as the first one signifies challenge, defiance or overbearing and the second one restraint and someone who is closed off or rejecting.

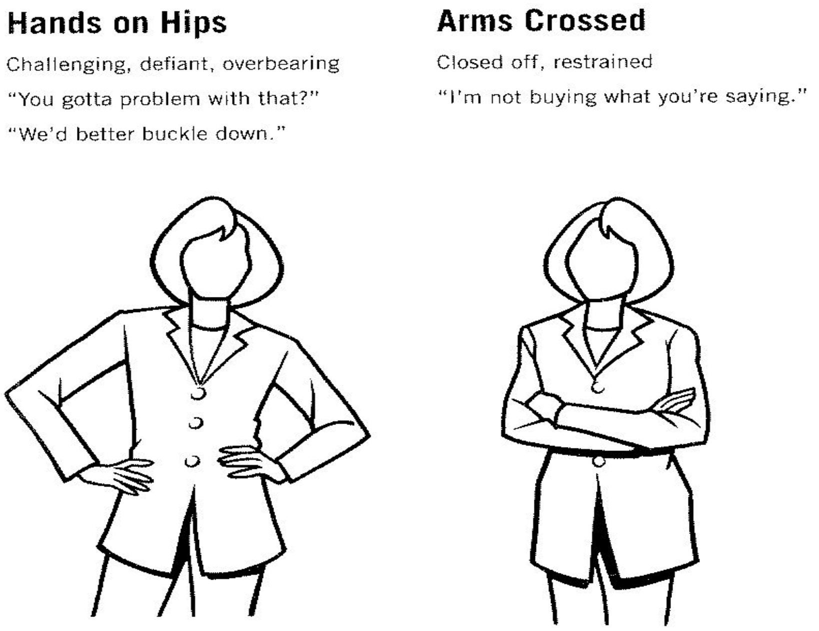


Figure 5. taken from Koegel (2007:64-65) with approval

Zeller on the other hand gives advice on what a speaker should do (Zeller 2009). For example, by adopting an upright position we can influence the flow of our thoughts and turn them into more positive ones, and vice versa. Thoughts then follow our body and the body follows the thoughts. Therefore, that what we do not feel we cannot non-verbally express either. (Zeller, 2009:79)

Zeller also stresses the importance of the first impression. Namely it takes people only about 10 milliseconds to notice our entrance and to arrive at some judgment about it. That is why it is important to be aware of the impression one leaves from the very beginning. (Zeller, 2009:83)

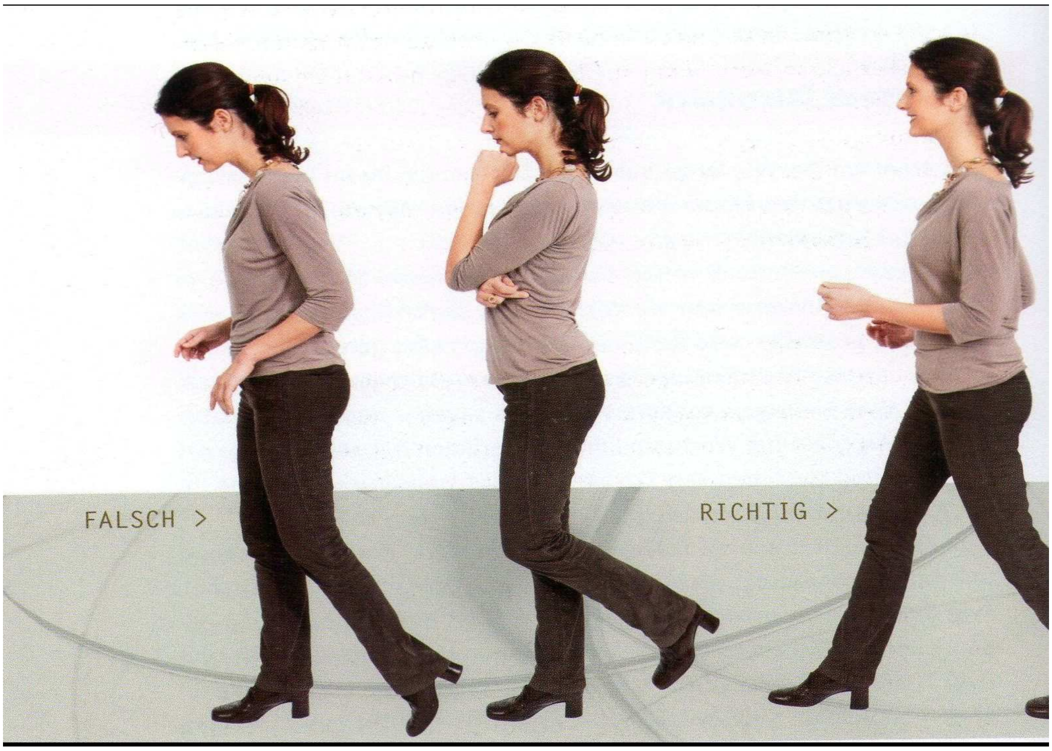


Figure 6. taken from Zeller (2009: 82) with approval

As previously mentioned, Molcho (1989) described the perfect standing position. Zeller (2009, 87-97) adds a few more details that make Molcho´s description complete. Hands should either be at the side of the body or at the belt-line, not stiffly pressed to our body but slightly touching, allowing complete freedom of movement and gesture. At no point should we hide our hands behind our back or in our pockets. Palms should be facing the audience when gesturing or in the case of PowerPoint, pointing towards the screen. Feet firmly on the ground, slightly apart-aligned with our hips; this is the position we are most stable in. Even if pushed we are not likely to loose balance.

While standing like that hands should not at any point be placed on the hips. This could signal arrogance, dominance and in no case security and sovereignty. Shifting weight from one leg to another is also to be avoided because it signals insecurity, boredom and will not meet with positive reception.

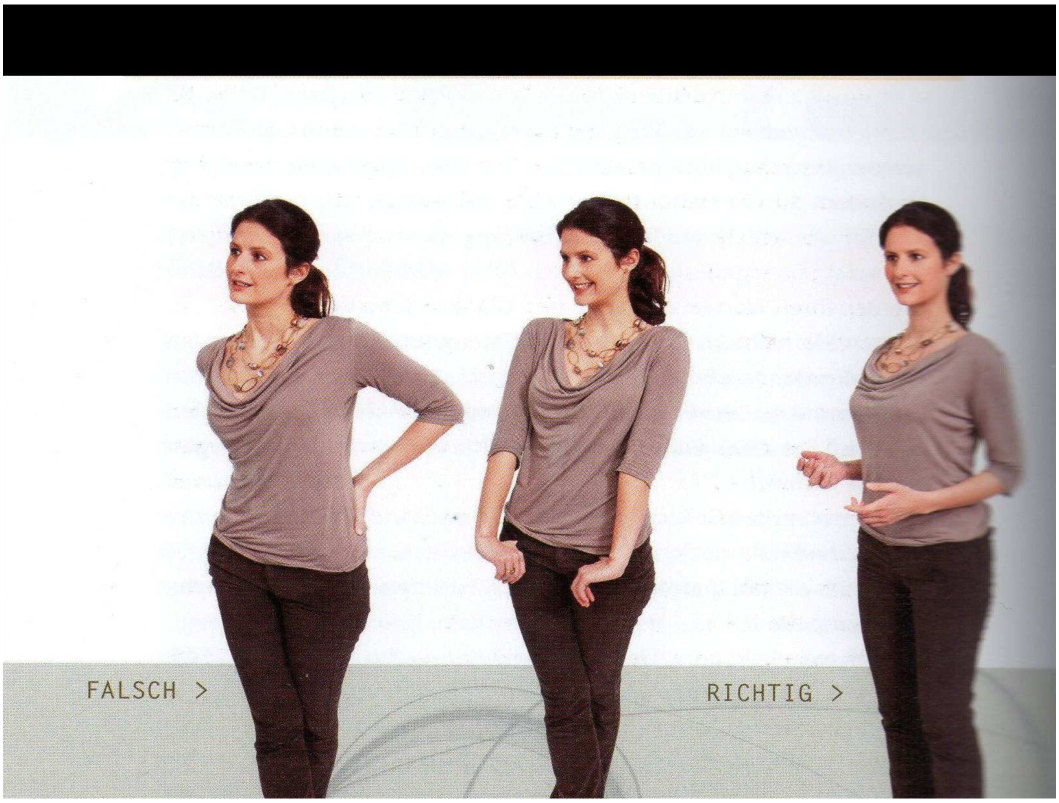


Figure 7. taken from Zeller (2009:88) with approval

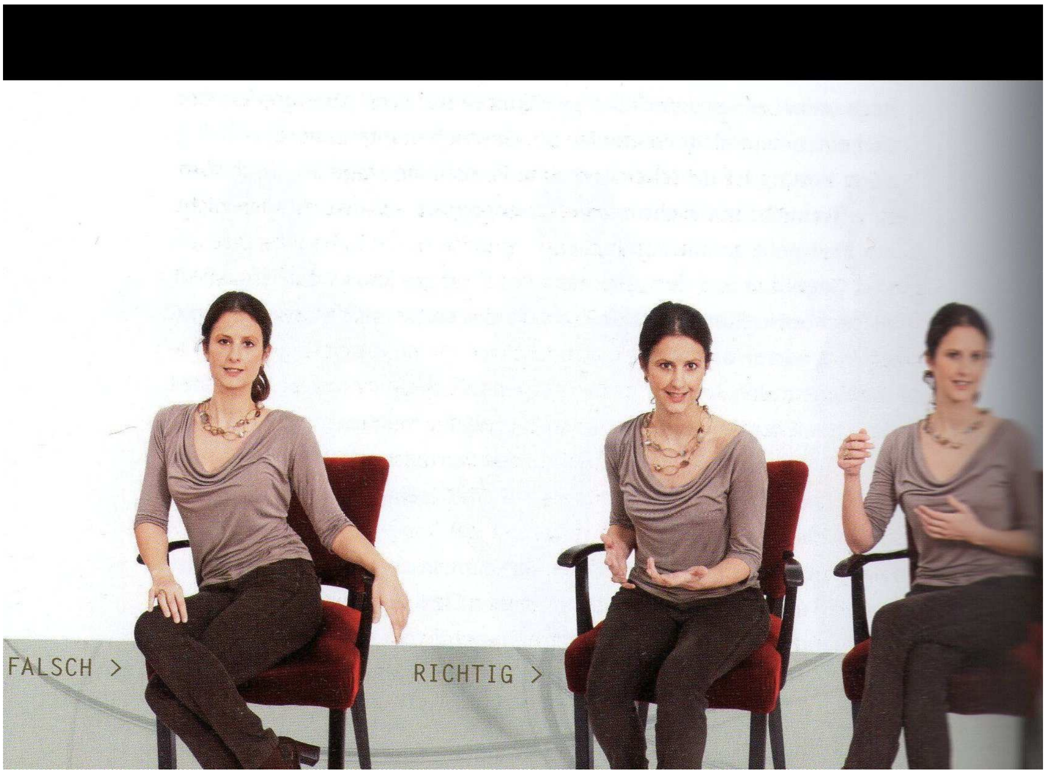


Figure 8. taken from Zeller (2009:90) with approval

In some instances, we might be able to sit during our presentations. Sitting positions can also be a challenge regarding sending out a wrong or right message. Hands should be above the table and visible, not crossed on our chest to be used as a shield. Additionally this gives us the ability to gesture with no major obstructions. Feet tend to point toward the people we like.

When it comes to gesticulation, there is an unwritten rule: all gestures that point from down to up, i.e. point upwards and above the belt-line are considered positive while all gestures that go downwards and under the belt-line tend to be considered as negative. Think of how the corners of the mouth rise when we smile and lower when we frown. Additionally, gestures that go upwards or downwards confirm or refute the truthfulness of our statements. (Koegel, 2007:81; Zeller 2009, 87-97)

Three images in the following figure are examples for negative and positive statements accompanied by hand gestures. The first, female, figure is making an upward gesture, a positive gesture that goes along all positive statements presented on the picture. The second, male figure is making a downward movement that has a negative connotation and goes with the negative statement about decrease in profit. Final, female figure has her hands above the belt line and the spreading is shown. That has positive connotation, implies growth and expansion, both positive in the business world. Her hand gestures accompany positive statements she is making.

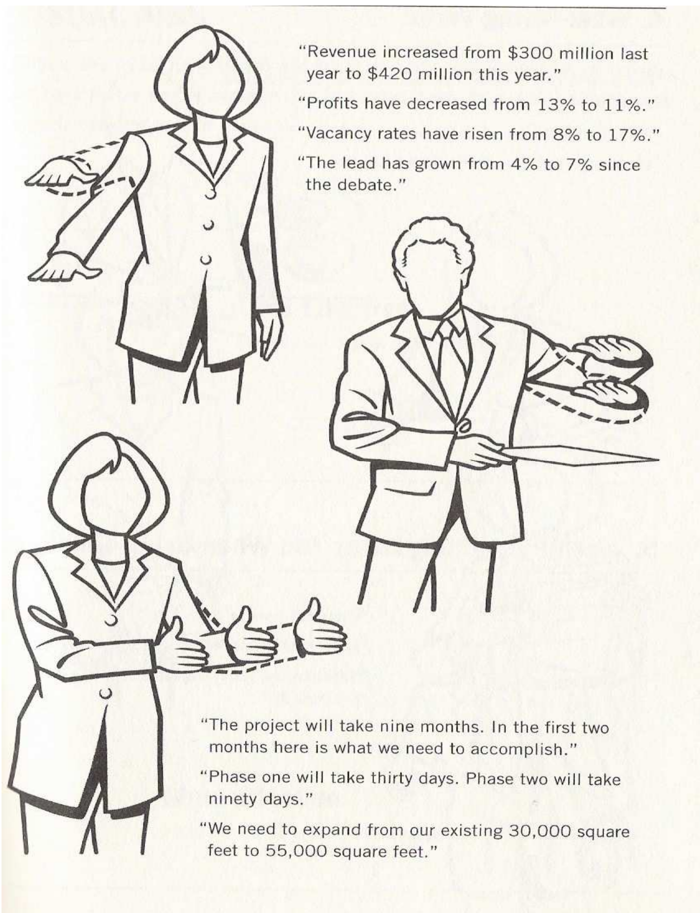


Figure 9. taken from Koegel (2007:77) with approval

3.4.4. Visual aids

When it comes to visual aids they are generally considered as good since they supplement and highlight the message, while graphs put across complex ideas more simply; they save time and offer variety, whilst visualizing what the speaker is saying. Naturally, presenters should be the key, most “valuable visual aid” (Schmatzer and Mautner 1989:144), every other visual aid should simply be a part of the presentation.

If a flipchart, overhead or PowerPoint is being used then the speaker should not keep his/her attention on these visual aids but again at the audience as much as possible (Koegel, 2007:105).

If using an overhead, drawings should not be complicated, they could in fact be made on the spot, during the presentation. Understandably, all visual aids distract and take the attention away from the speaker, nevertheless they should be adapted so that they properly support the message the speaker is trying to make.

Reynolds (2008) offers advice on how to prepare and perform a successful PowerPoint presentation. Slides that one uses should not be over-crowded, but rather one should rather focus on having more clearly structured slides, even if some slides consist of only pictures. Those pictures should be relevant to the topic and points.

PowerPoint presentation should be useless without the speaker, this would mean that regardless of how clearly structured slides might be the speaker has to be there to explain them to the audience. Some additional information can be put on a handout. Reading out from slides is something that should be avoided; the focus of the audience should always be on the speaker and not on the slides. Since if the audience can read the same they hear they are likely to read it then to focus on the speaker and listen.

Furthermore, one should pay attention on the arrangement of colours when preparing the slides, especially when choosing a colour for the background and headings. Every section should have the same background and placed on a separate slide while accompanying arguments or even single key-words should have background of their own. In this way, as the sections share the background on the one hand and arguments on the other the audience should be able to follow without any problems where the speaker is with his talk at every moment. Finally, as the slides should not be complicated but easy to follow there should be one key-element standing out. One can stress it either by colours or size, it should be slightly bigger than the other elements (letters, figures and so on)

One of the examples Reynolds (2008:15) offers is presented here:

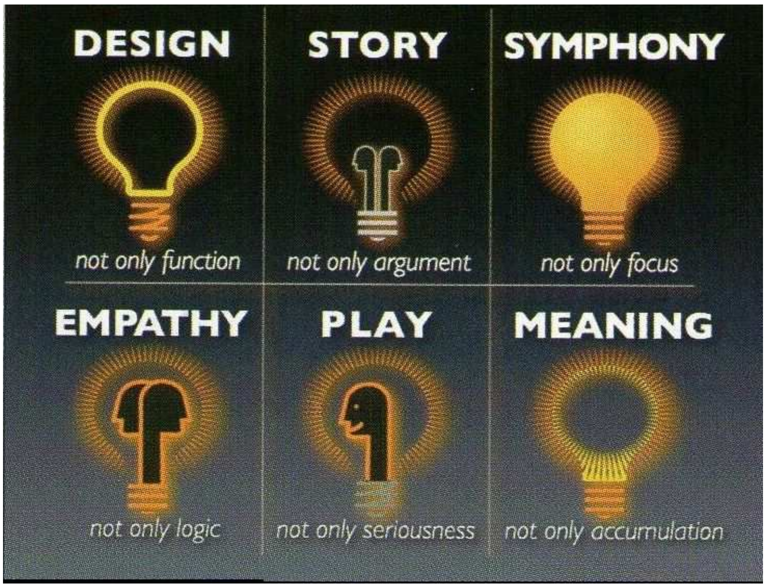


Figure 10. taken from Reynolds (2008:15) with approval

Instead of turning these aspects into bullet points on one slide, this picture shows the message in a clearer and interesting way. It also allows creativity in connecting the points while explaining and it is easy to memorize.

Creativity in colours and design, pictures or even just one impact word instead of list of words and bullet points can make a presentation much more appealing, memorisable and effective. By following ´less is more´ principle much more effect can be achieved. If the audience is offered concrete visualisation of one's words the audience will not have to try and visualize or interpret things and the attention will be focused on the speaker.

4. Data Analysis

The issue that motivated me to focus on the area of presentation making and hence research it more thoroughly was the question what it is that students look for the most in presentations, i.e. what is their main focus in observing a presentation. Besides students´ focus, this chapter will also deal with professors´ teachings on presentation skills in order to discover whether what professors focus on while teaching is the same as what students focus on while making or observing a presentation. In other words whether the two focuses differ and to what extent. Finding answers to these research questions would hopefully be helpful to some students struggling with preparing presentations.

Three kinds of data were collected and will be considered in the analysis: feedback sheets that students filled in at the end of presentations done by their colleagues, student suggestions on same presentations and informal interview of two lecturers on the courses that they taught.

The feedback sheet was formed following examples for similar data collection found on several internet sites[2] but mostly following comments and the advice of two greatly appreciated professors. In the final part of this feedback sheet there was a section where students had the opportunity to add some comments or suggestions, i.e. to state whether they would do something differently. On the feedback sheet that they were asked to fill out there was firstly a question regarding age and sex of the observers then a table consisting of 7 questions or sections covering posture, eye-contact, voice, gesticulation, knowledge and usage of visual aids or ´help devices´ such as a black-board, overhead, chart or PowerPoint (all of these were included since I student preferences were yet unknown). In addition to these comments, lecturers asked students to add additional feedback on separate pieces of paper that speakers were meant to receive at the end of their presentations. Being aware that I was observing the classes and being themselves interested in the topic of this paper most students

[2] http://www.businessballs.com/freeonlineresources.htm

handed in those sheets of paper together with feedback sheets given by me. After reading through these comments I contacted the mentioned two professors again inquiring about more information on the structure of their classes.

These two professors, which will be referred to as professor A. and professor B, afterwards offered some informal insight into classes. Due to the shortage of time and numerous obligations that the lecturers had towards the end of the semester our contact and interview was limited to e-mails. Both professors were asked to briefly describe their classes and elaborate on the focus of their respective classes as well as comment whether they consider that the students have acquired and used what they were being taught or not.

Both students´ comments and the insight those two professors offered will be more thoroughly discussed later within this chapter.

As far as the class observation is concerned there were four different groups of students that were observed during classes. Classes consisted of a different number of students; one class had 12 students present at the time of the evaluation; another two classes had 19 and the fourth group had 17 students present at the time. The total of students present during those classes was 67.

Number of students in classes:	Number of presentations held:
Class 1. 17	**4**
Class 2. 12	**4**
Class 3. 19	**4**
Class 4. 19	**9**
Total: 67	**Total: 21**

23 of these students held a presentation which was observed by the rest of the respective classes. Number of presentations held per class was approximately 4. There was one case where 9 presentations were done during a block-class; that was one of the classes where 19 students were present. Class 2 and class 3 had groups of students who were 23 and younger while classes 1 and 4 had students ranging from 22 to over 50 (in two cases).

During all these presentations students had to present their topic and arguments. The audience on the other hand was asked to observe and evaluate aspects of the speaker's verbal and non-verbal ways of communication as well as to pay attention to structure and the use of visual aids.

Taking into account that 4 groups from two different universities were observed, this should offer a generally good overview of a student's way of observing and of their expectations.

Since the number of presentations per class was 4 there were 4 tables on each feedback sheet.

Title of the presentation:							
	1. Excellent (Completely satisfied)	**2. Very good**	**3. Good**	**4. Fair**	**5. Not so good**	**6. Bad**	**7. Not at all satisfied**
a) Posture							
b) Eye contact							
c) Gesticulation/movement							
d) Knowledge							
e) Usage of help devices (cards, blackboard, PowerPoint etc.)							
f) Voice							

The example of the entire feedback sheet the students filled out is included in the Appendix.

4.1. Analysis of feedback sheets

Some feedback sheets were either omitted or incomplete therefore they had to be excluded from evaluation. Particularly in class 4 (see pg.53), where there were 9 presentations that were held, some students did not fill in questionnaires but only handed in the sheets with their comments and suggestions. They stated that there was not enough time for them to complete the feedback sheets constructed by me and properly observe all presentations as well.

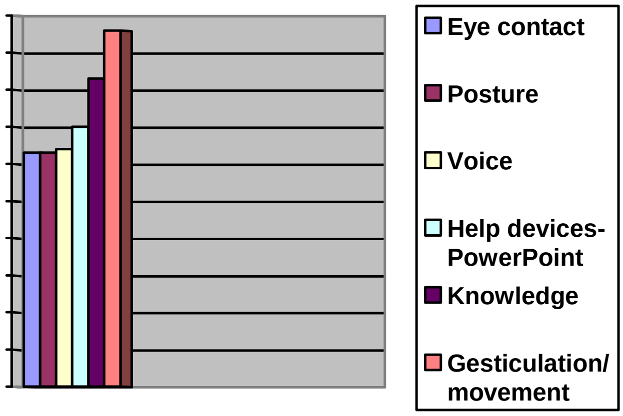
In total there were 38 feedback sheets that were closely looked at and 57 separate sheets with additional comments. Since, every feedback sheet had 4 tables, for 4 different presentations, in sum there were 152 presentations that were analysed.

All of the mentioned aspects that were observed were scored on a scale from 1-7:

1-excellent,
2-very good,
3-good,
4-fair,
5-not so good,
6-bad,
7- not at all satisfied.

Marking (such as 1, 2, 6, 7) would imply that stronger effect was made and that more attention was focused on those aspects in presentations. On the other hand marking something as *good* (3), *fair* (4) or *not so good* (5) would imply that something was either satisfactory or not but that it did not cause further comment.

Rating of mentioned aspects that were observed resulted from the scoring students made. The results showed that gesticulation, knowledge, voice and help devices, in this cases PowerPoint attracted the most attention in a student audience. Where it can be noted that gesticulation, knowledge are well above eye contact and posture therefore it could be assumed that these aspects attracted most attention, they were the main focus during students´ observations.



They were the ones usually rated as excellent, very good, bad or even in two cases very bad (rating of one PowerPoint presentation). Remaining aspects, posture and eye-contact, were mostly rated as good or fair. Surprisingly, eye-contact was not that strictly judged.

Following this, while evaluating feedback sheets I was noting which aspects were more strongly marked and which received moderate reactions. Regarding the aspects marked with 3, 4 or 5.there were no additional comments while after ratings with 1, 2, 6 or 7 there was usually one or more additional comment of praise or a suggestion for improvement if necessary.

There were certain expectations when it comes to eye-contact but there was also a great deal of understanding. Interestingly, sufficient or insufficient eye-contact is brought into relation with how good/bad one's preparation is. The more prepared the person was, the more relaxed, more frequent the eye contact was, and vice versa. This conclusion was made after a feedback session in one of the classes. After realizing the correlation between preparation and eye-contact in one group I informally asked other groups for their opinions. This was done at the end of the class since the presentations were done by then and students were generally more relaxed.

It was generally observed that the younger the students were, the more critical would they get. In addition, their expectations were slightly higher and so called ´student solidarity´ for the one standing in front and doing the talk was less present than in the other groups. This occurred mostly in class 2 and 3 while in classes 1 and 4 where there was a wider variation in years among students (from 22 to over 50) this was not the case. On the other hand older students, besides tending to be more polite while giving feedback, tended to use drawings (smiley faces etc.) in order to strengthen their point. This was noted in classes 1 and 4.

Classes had predominantly female participants. It was noticed that were more willing to fill in the feedback sheet but that men tended to add more additional comments on separate sheets. With younger observers, male participants tended to comment more and give more advice yet when it came to older ones; it was the female participants that were more prone to offering advice or simply expressing their opinion.

However, no general conclusion can be made regarding the age or gender differences in these presentations.

When the afore mentioned results are brought into connection to Aristotle's idea of *pathos*, *ethos* and *logos* it can be concluded that, consciously or not, the students´ main focus is on *logos* (argumentation or knowledge) followed by *ethos* (personality and stance); where under *ethos* one would have to think of posture and possibly of the voice intonation while the understanding of *logos* remains the identical to initial understanding, mentioned in previous chapters. *Pathos* could also be considered as important since it is related to personal involvement and devotion to the topic of one's presentation. Nevertheless, the stance and argumentation seem to have been the major focus of these groups at least. Additionally, there is a small, however not insignificant, difference between the focus on non-verbal and verbal aspect of communication which can be seen from the diagram, see eye contact and posture results with regards to the slightly higher results for voice.

4.2. Student answers to open-questions

As previously mentioned, after filling out the feedback sheets students had the option to write whether they would do something differently, which most of them did. Together with feedback sheets that I gave them, some students shared the feedback sheets that their colleagues used to write additional comments on. Since I decided to focus more on the aspects these students were commenting on and the ways they did it, those comments are considered as relevant for the overall analysis. They were treated and observed as comments from specific student audience to specific student speakers. This way it is easier to connect lecturer observations about the classes with student comments, i.e. the connection between what the mentioned two teachers tried to teach and what the students acquired is somewhat clearer. Even if some students failed to excel in their presentations it was noted and commented on by their colleagues.

The additional student comments showed that students primarily look for knowledge, interest, enthusiasm, appeal and a “nice approach” (smile, openness). In order to get their attention one must show that one wants to be there and not that being there, doing the talk is a MUST. Some students expressed that a good idea is to remind the audience/the class where one is with the presentation as well as to repeat main points and hence stress the take-home message. These mentioned students´ comments correspond to what was previously mentioned under *peroratio*, introduced by Aristotle as well as to advice by some experts also previously mentioned. (see pg. 5 and 9)

Also, there were some comments and ideas on speaker’s voice which should be loud enough, calm and clear, should have a natural flow and the pace of talking should make it easy to follow ideas. They look for changes in pitch, speed and tone of the voice. Also, they expect pauses in order to stress the meaning, the importance, to build up the effect. This can affect the presentation, make the topic more interesting.

As far as non-verbal communication is concerned expressing of all emotions should also be paid attention to since that makes presentations livelier and interesting. With emotions comes the body language which should be conscious and should support the meaning of the words that are being expressed. Hands should be above the belt line, or align with the upper part of the body. One aspect of non-verbal communication was also commented on and that was eye-contact which should also be conscious and ideally eye contact should be established with everyone in the class.

Final aspect of presentations that students commented on was the visual aspect or more specifically PowerPoint. According to comments and suggestions students offered, only “impact” words should be used on slides. Slides containing too much information were considered undesirable or difficult to understand. Moreover, some comments suggested that there should not be too many slides either, however there was no suggestion of how many slides might have been desirable. Therefore this will have to depend on the speaker and the topic the speaker chooses. In addition to these there was one comment or better said a suggestion about a “clicker”. One student wrote: “A clicker would have been nice; a good speaker would not walk to the computer to change slides”.

Finally, some humour is desirable but one should not overdo it.

Some students tend to, unnecessarily, get anxious over feedback and the reaction of their colleagues even though it is hardly any harsher than these comments mentioned above.

These comments mentioned above suggest that students are paying considerable attention to presentations done by their colleagues. These comments point to what students look for in a presentation, what they are focused on. This means, clear and calm voice while explaining not over-crowded slides, that could simply include only ´impact´ words, and all this accompanied by gestures that stress the meaning of our words and slides. Supportive and positive gestures should be used and also eye-contact should be established. Well prepared and practiced visuals with appropriate body language enhance understanding of that what is being heard.

There is a significant concurrence with what was mentioned at the beginning of this paper, in the chapter on public speaking and rhetoric as well as with some advice that was mentioned in later chapters.

Student comments and suggestions such as these were not expected at the beginning when I decided to ask for their opinion. Their suggestions might come from personal discoveries and findings or they have been instructed by their professors. Therefore I consulted their lecturers again in order to acquire more background information on how were students being taught.

4.3. The view of the lecturers

This section includes observations, opinions and focuses of the two professors whose classes I observed. It offers professors' perspective on what is important, what to focus on and which skills one should acquire by the end of semester. There was no specific questionnaire formulated in order to gather this information. Both teachers were asked to write a few words (approximately a page) describing their classes, i.e. what is it that they teach and where and how is it related to Presentation Skills. Secondly they were asked to shortly explain their teaching methods and point out the most important aspect of presentations according to them, i.e. what it is it that they point out as the most important aspect. Finally, they were asked to briefly offer their opinion and evaluate to what extent they think the students have acquired offered skills and knowledge.

The class held by professor A. was on the oral communication skills, and it is a part of the curricula for students in the second part of their studies. The course is largely presentation skills plus a group interactive element.

As far as the teaching methods are concerned, students in this class learn by doing. This means that students gain some experience, under guidance, reflect on it, experiment and correct if necessary. Towards the end of the course everyone should how to use their voice, how should they stand, give eye contact, use their face, move, use language and so on. Nevertheless, the more important aspect according to professor A. is centering since everything else (vocal quality, poise, use of space, gesture, presentation structure, choice of words, fluency, thinking on your feet, dealing with anxiety) is then easily acquired. The second most important aspect is to form a clear take-home message. Finally, in the opinion of professor A., towards the end of the course the majority of students acquire what this professor is trying to teach them: “they have taken on board the various elements of a good presentation, particularly centering and take-home message”.

The second class taught by professor B. was more goal oriented and organized. This class was taught at the Austrian Marketing University to students going for BA in Marketing. These students were offered a specific task and during the semester they were preparing for that task, i.e. a potential trip to New York where they would pitch for a marketing company. Since they all attended Marketing University this trip and self-representation during that trip was of high importance. According to their task they were being taught in writing and oral skills on subject related topics. Problem solving, exercises in pitch, tone, posture, gesture, eye contact, hand movements, use of equipment were central focuses of this course. Additionally, structure, accuracy of content, focus on getting the point across, involving the audience, maintain interest and keep the information flow going without unnecessarily talking for too long are highly important factors. Towards the end of the school year most of the improvement was usually seen in structure, interesting introductions and use of slides, as well as decrease in anxiety.

Both professor A and professor B taught presentation skills to students and towards the end of the semester were satisfied with the achieved results. These two classes differ in that one of them was more specific, more oriented towards presentation skills in general and the other one was goal oriented. Students in the first class were trained in oral presentation skills for general purpose and general appliance. Students in the other class on the other hand had a specific task that they had to prepare for. The difference in teaching might be the result of professor A.´s private teaching of another presentation skills course, i.e. *Alexander Technique.* This course will be mentioned in more detail later on.

In professor A.´s opinion it is “intimately connected to presentation skills as it is about learning to be able to step outside of our restricting, learned habits in order to choose how we respond to a given stimulus, e.g. giving a presentation. Using the *Alexander Technique* means that we can widen our presenting repertoire according to topic, audience, context etc. This is largely what makes a really good presenter, i.e. someone who can adapt to a wide range of different presenting situations and doesn’t just have a habitual manner which is then applied everywhere regardless. “

Nevertheless, regardless of the difference in teaching both professors were content with the level of knowledge the students acquired and applied towards the end of semester. According to comments and suggestions students offered, that were discussed before, there was no obvious difference between groups of students taught by these two professors.

Finally, there was no major difference noted between teachings and advices offered by professors A and B and those mentioned earlier in this paper, both from Aristotle and contemporary experts.

5. Field Work and practical experience

Besides the literature and online research, together with the study that was conducted few practical experiences that I had will be presented in this chapter. Firstly a short overview of the courses and workshops that dealt with public speaking will be made followed by description of my internship at the United Nations Information Service (UNIS). Finally, since I accidentally managed to find examples for the best and the worst presentation during one congress that I attended a short overview of this congress and presentations is also included in this chapter.

The first course that I attended was the course on *Alexander Technique* and the others were on rhetoric and presentation skills. Out of these three courses one was the course offered by a professor at the University, Prof. Harriet Anderson, that was the one on *Alexander Technique*, while the second two were offered by the *Bildungsforum* for students solely.

Shortly after those courses I did an internship with the United Nations here in Vienna which was followed by a trip to Oslo in order to attend a Congress there.

Since these additional courses and the internship overlapped with the entire research I had the chance to follow some ideas and suggestions as well as naturally acquire new knowledge in the field of presentation skills.

5.1. Course on *Alexander Technique*

The purpose of the *Alexander Technique* is to remind us of and to get in touch with the good postural habits and natural reflexes that are a part of each of us - we were born with them. Considering that posture, anxiety and gestures are some of the problems that speakers deal with, *Alexander Technique* offers advice on how to conquer the fear, master the art of breathing and control anxiety. In addition, proper posture and breathing can relieve one of chronical problems with back or neck. That was one of the reasons for the development of the *Alexander Technique*. An Australian actor, F.M. Alexander started experiencing some health problems and after doctors were unable to help him he devised a technique that relieved him of tension in his neck and back which had further caused chronic laryngitis. He shared his technique with friends and doctors and was persuaded to start teaching on a more professional level. Nowadays there is a number of teachers teaching all over the world. His technique is applied by sportsmen, musicians, actors, performers of various genres including public speaking.

During the course of a lesson the teacher would, through verbal and 'hands on' instruction, help the pupil to experience a feeling of ease and lightness that comes with an improved use of oneself and reminds us of a freedom of movement perhaps not experienced since childhood. The student begins to recognize that postural habits, which may have interfered with consistent coordinated physical use, are within our control and the amount of tension used during a particular task is up to us. There is not just one way to go about our activities, and with thought, consciousness and awareness, we become open to the very many alternatives. It is with an understanding of these alternatives that clear postural decisions can be made[3].

There are three principles this technique is based upon:

- know yourself; know your weaknesses so you can improve them
- simply say ´no´ to your bad habits
- think out loud; our thoughts influence our muscles and our mood[4].

Every student or attendee of the seminar gets an opportunity to name his/her own weaknesses and what he/she would like to improve. In the course of the day this turns into a major focus concerning this one particular individual.

All attendees have to take the floor at some point, stand in front of the entire group and give a short presentation on some topic.

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[3] http://www.harrietanderson.com/grundlagen.shtml
[4] http://www.alexvoce.com/the_technique.htm

During his/her presentation the trainer would correct and improve his/hers posture and gestures. Constructive feedback from the rest of the group and the trainer would follow after which the presentation would have to be repeated taking all the previous corrections into account.

Figure 11. Taken from http://www.harrietanderson.com/grundlagen.shtml

5.2. *Bildungsforum*: Courses on presentation skills for students

Bildungsforum is an association for training and further education. In the scope of their program they offer a range of courses open to everyone, especially students. They advertise via the University of Vienna Career service, UNIPORT, which is their official partner[5].

As previously mentioned, in order to widen my knowledge in a practical sense I enrolled in two courses, one was on presentation skills another one was on rhetoric. They were both intensive weekend courses consisting of lectures accompanied by exercises and group feedback at the end of the course.

The one on rhetoric focused more on how to say things properly, i.e. the most efficient way to get your message across and influence people both in

[5] http://www.bildungsforum.at/WIEN

presentations and in everyday life.

The one on presentation skills, as its name suggests, dealt with structuring presentations, dealing with fears, handling your body language and voice in more detail. They were both quite similar regarding their structure and goals the difference being that the second one was more closely focused on presentation skills than the first one, it was more practical and offered more time for exercises.

At the beginning of both courses participants had to name one point which they consider to be the most important in a presentation. All ideas were then dealt with one after another. Starting with fear before taking the floor, first impressions, and continuing with tackling voice, gestures, eye contact and body movement, the trainer presented good and bad examples of each of those issues. Turning it into comedy at certain points, breaking the ice in that manner, made it easier for the rest of the group to practice afterwards. After each aspect of presenting was explained and dealt with there had to be a demonstration of acquired knowledge by a few volunteers. By the end of the day everyone had had the opportunity to stand in front of the group at least once. Feedback on the presentations that were done followed immediately so that attendees could think about and improve on what was needed for the next small presentation they would give. All attendees had 20 minutes to choose a topic and prepare a 10 minute presentation. Regardless of the fact that by that moment the group members were known to each other and were not strangers anymore there was still a considerable level of anxiety and nervousness present. That called for more exercises dealing with this issue.

Attending these courses has shown that presentation making, like any other skill, has to be practised and that there are many layers of expertise one can achieve.

What I learned was that many people have problems with presentation making and performing, the exact reason that motivated me to choose this topic for research. Additionally I had the opportunity to see the occurrence of actual problems that were mentioned earlier, such as anxiety and forgetfulness, and how they were approached.

In sum, it was a practical experience of everything I have found out earlier and which later on I had the chance to practice as well.

5.3. United Nations Information Service (UNIS)

During the summer semester 2009 I was fortunate enough to get an internship with the United Nations based in Vienna. The Department I was assigned to was the United Nation Information Service (UNIS). UNIS is in charge of strategic public relations and information management of a major United Nations information office. This included the promotion of different UN-related activities, dealing with a variety of public relations client groups (from media through NGOs to academic institutions and government representatives) and engaging in both daily routine work to creative management of special events and campaigns. UNIS Vienna liaises with the media, NGOs and the general public in Austria, Hungary, Slovakia and Slovenia and services the Vienna-based UN programs. Apart from all this, in accordance with the UN´s new policy to be more open and transparent to the public, UNIS was in charge of the Vienna International Centre visitor’s service. Besides numerous guided tours, there was a substantial number of presentations held on a daily basis. These presentations were mainly for student groups coming from all over the world. I had the opportunity to talk to quite a few of those students after they had attended presentations. In addition, my supervisor Mr. N.N. (name had to be omitted) was usually the one holding presentations there. Since he was familiar with my field of interest, I was invited to join him and later on prepare some constructive feedback.

The groups that Mr. N.N. prepared his presentations for were varied in numbers from 20 to 70 people and presentations were usually held in two different rooms.

These two rooms were completely different in terms of one being organized in a classroom style while the other was more in the style of a multi-media conference room. Naturally, the nature of presentations and their reception differed according to the room.

In the classroom-style room there were approximately 30-40 seating places facing the speaker. There was a table as well, which the speaker could use as a ´shield´, i.e. to stand behind it and use it as a physical distance barrier. However, Mr. N.N., following common sense stood in front of that table, while lecturing in that room, and faced the audience directly. Not knowing what to do with his hands he thought it most convenient to cross them on his chest and buffer that body signal by casually leaning on the table. Following that movement he automatically crossed his legs. Unfortunately these two postures combined managed to distance him from his audience, according to student comments offered after N.N.´s presentation and findings mentioned in previous chapters. Students´ comments were that his posture was perceived as overtly authoritative and distant. They were keen to acquire new information but the formality of approach resulted in their loss of interest and they assumed a more distant attitude themselves. They simply decided not to listen, as a group.

On the other hand, in the multi-media room the seating arrangement was like that of a cinema, seating about 200 people, all listeners facing the speaker and the wall that PowerPoint presentations and movies were usually projected on. This room also had a table, slightly more extensively equipped with microphones and speakers. This table usually seated 5 people during various panels. In this room Mr. N.N. made the same mistake with leaning onto the table and crossing his legs. However, the size of the room and the group made him feel anxious in most cases, therefore he never managed to cross his hands on his chest but what he did was to fiddle with his fingers a lot or hide his hands behind his back. In this room, he was most comfortable using the microphone but was not careful enough while moving his hands so there was often a lot of unnecessary noise. At certain points he would realize that he should move a little bit, but was limited due to the microphone.

As far as the audience interaction went, the size of the room was frightening and confusing so he merely concentrated on the first rows, floor or the ceiling,

avoiding any eye contact whatsoever.
Nevertheless, according to student-listeners all of this could have been more or less understood if they had had any kind of visual aid. Mr. N.N. mostly did not use any visuals at all (PowerPoint, charts, graphs or even an overhead projector).
After observing a few presentations and collecting substantial feedback and criticism from students I had a meeting with Mr. N.N. where we decided to introduce a few changes and observe their effect.
We first decided to use a microphone that had a Bluetooth function, since Mr. N.N. was not ready to speak without it. We reached some compromise with the use of the microphone; namely, he was going to use a microphone only then when groups numbered more than 30 students. We went to the multimedia room and realized that there could be some seating arrangement that would enable him to speak clearly and loud enough even without a microphone.
Secondly, since he offered extensive information about various UN organisations and institutions and tried to connect them, we decided to try some kind of PowerPoint presentation. I used the term ´some kind´ since we reached a compromise regarding a PP presentation that would consist of only one slide presenting all UN organisations.
Still it looked quite complicated so, finally, I suggested a laser pointer that he would not use constantly but only when switching from one organisation to another and when pointing out the relations. In case he lost the audience's attention, the laser was supposed to trigger it back, or so we hoped.
In the end, since his presentations were not interactive, and he wanted them to be, we decided to try some ´ice-breaking statements´: "There are no stupid or silly questions, there are only unasked ones. Do not be afraid to ask me anything you want at any time during my presentation". Spontaneously, Mr. N.N. later on started using more personal statements and examples and even, very carefully calculated jokes.
The subsequent reactions from later groups concerning our innovations were more than satisfying. Mr. N.N. still needed to work on his gestures and measured

movement, however, he was not crossing his legs any longer, and he had a livelier interaction with his audience as well as their constant attention during presentations.

5.4. Academic Conference

Immediately after my internship I went to Oslo in order to attend the 11th European Congress of Psychology. The congress lasted for three days during which I had the opportunity to meet various interesting people and attend numerous presentations on different topics. The audience that attended these presentations consisted mostly of students and quite a few other scientists. That is where I had the opportunity to find examples for the most and least successful presentation, according to audience reactions and comments. Fortunately, the students were very open and communicative so we were able to exchange a few ideas regarding our research fields respectively.

As far as the Congress was concerned, it was organized in three different hotels plus the Nobel Peace Prize Institute. There was a reception at the Oslo City Hall as well as the opening ceremony at the Oslo Opera House. Lectures and presentations were held each day from 9-18 o'clock; unfortunately many of them overlapped with one another. There were about 80 key-note speakers and more than 1000 presenters, including Prof. Philip G. Zimbardo, inventor of the Stanford Prison Experiment in 1971[6].

Since the Congress took place in only a few hotels certain adaptations had to be made regarding the rooms where presentations were held. There were only 3 bigger halls, the biggest one seating over 200 people. The rest of the rooms seated a maximum of 40-50 people. In a few instances there was more than one speaker presenting; joint studies were presented usually by all the people involved.

I was rather interested in hearing what did some of the students think of presentations they had just seen. There was no structural or official interview conducted, the conclusions are based mainly upon majority of comments and

[6] http://www.prisonexp.org/

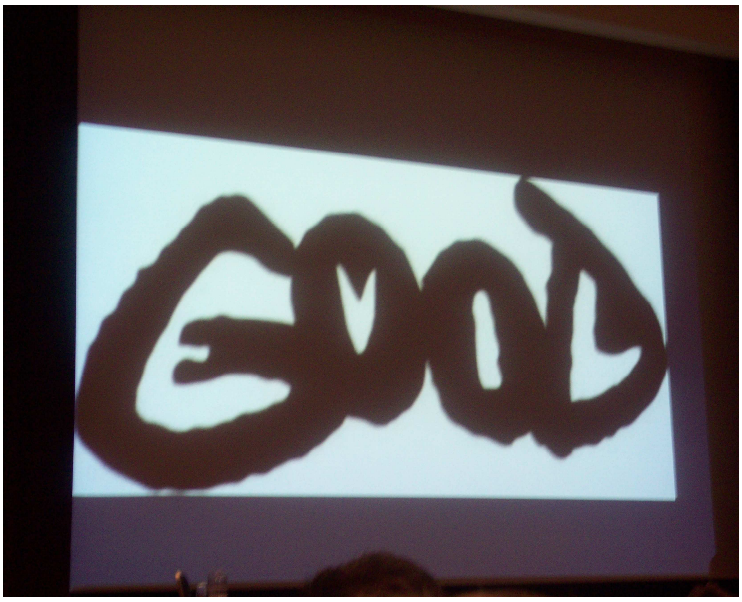
critique, as well as praise. As many answers as possible were noted down at that very moment which helped in forming a short summary, or overview, after some presentations. Additionally, I was making notes for my self during these presentations.

It has to be mentioned that since the Congress lasted for a few days and due to the fact that there were few social evenings and gatherings organized, there was enough opportunity to get to know many of the students. That allowed the freedom of contact and speech while discussing presentations. Additionally, since there was a significant level of interest in studies of one another students were pleased to help and offer their opinion especially during our discussion time, therefore as one presentation specifically was criticized more than any other and it was characterized as the least successful presentation it will also be referred to here as such. Similarly, one presentation was praised more than any other during the entire conference for which reason it will be referred to as the most successful.

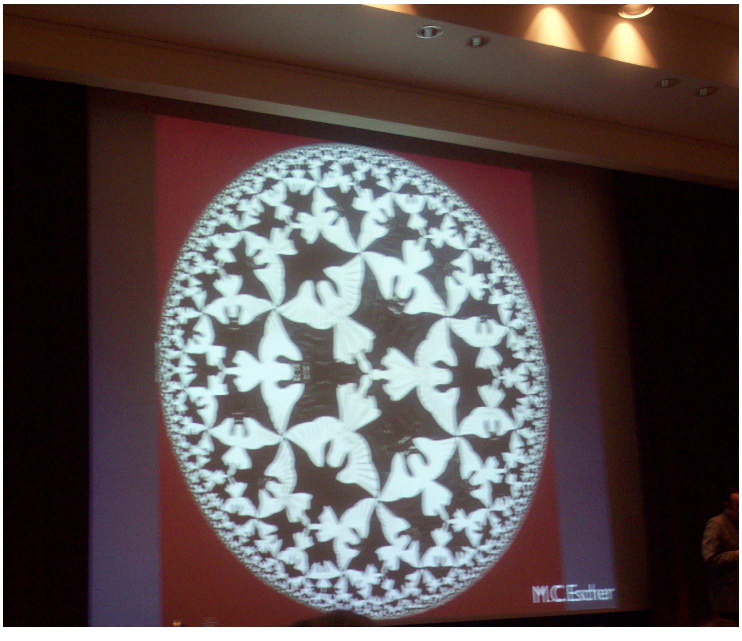
The one that was considered to be the least successful one was held in a smaller room that seated approximately 40 people. There were two speakers presenting their research. Both of them had their own PowerPoint presentation prepared. However, they were taking turns while speaking so a gap was always created while they were respectively setting up their parts. During this gap the attention of audience was lost and it was difficult to focus again. In addition, the speakers were sitting at the table behind their Notebooks, which presented physical obstacles between them and the audience. The big screen was behind their back so their bodies were casting shadows making it impossible for the audience to read from the screen. Since they were sitting, the whole presentation seemed static and their posture also influenced the loudness and clarity of their voices. Both speakers seemed quiet and insecure, which was enhanced by their position behind the table and Notebook. Consequently, there was almost no eye contact with the audience. The proximity of Notebooks made it easier for them to read, rather than speak freely. They were reading everything that was already on slides and almost no additional information was offered. The slides, on the other hand,

contained too much information. What they could have done was to put few main points on the slides and elaborate on them. It would have made the audience listen in case they had wanted more information.
Moreover, their PowerPoint presentations overlapped only in the sense that they were at the same time; as far as the structure and content were concerned they could have been completely separate. Furthermore, somewhere close to the middle of their presentation there was a power cut during which neither of the presenters tried to continue and prevent the silence that occurred. It only gave the audience the wrong, or possibly the right, impression of their skilfulness, knowledge and professionalism.

Shortly after this presentation there was a presentation held by Prof. Philip G. Zimbardo which marked the end of Congress. His presentation took place in the main hall, the one seating more than 200 people and there was still a shortage of chairs. The audience consisted mostly of students, although there was a number of other accomplished academics as well.
This presentation was about Zimbardo´s latest book *The Lucifer Effect. Understanding how Good People turn Evil*. Since there were over 200 people in the audience there was a substantial level of commotion before the presentation could begin. Zimbardo had previously prepared everything and while waiting for the crowd to settle in he played a song that served as an introduction to his presentation. Already during the first notes the audience started to react and calm down awaiting the beginning. While the song was playing Zimbardo was quietly sitting at the side of the big screen which was going to show his presentation. Then he stood up, assumed the central point on the stage and began. As an introduction after greeting he used an optical illusion showing good and evil inside each other explaining how some people can only read good and some can only read evil when they first see the picture. It is all just a matter of perception



Immediately after that he used M. C. Escher’s optical illusion:



He connected this to his idea of good/bad and thus angels and demons which co-exist in every human being. This was a good tactic to immediately gain and keep the attention of his audience. Besides that the slides he was showing were forming a cube that was constantly spinning and changing. The presented slides consisted of quite a few pictures, actual photographs, some definitions and theory. He did not include any elaborate explanations on any of his slides; explanations were exclusively verbal. In order to be sure that he would not lose the audience’s attention there was at least one remarkable photograph after every 5-6 slides.

Furthermore, Zimbardo was slowly pacing from one side of the spacious stage to the other and managed to maintain eye contact in such a manner that almost everyone had the feeling that they personally got a moment of his time.

As far as his voice goes, he had to use the microphone naturally, due to the number of the people in the audience and the size of the room. However, there were hardly any unnecessary noises, as usually happens when one uses the microphone.

In the end, Zimbardo´s presentation lasted for two hours and it was greeted with standing ovations from the audience.

Naturally, the fact that Philip G. Zimbardo is an accomplished academic and that his previous success might have affected his reception by the audience should not be forgotten. Nevertheless, I have to express genuine respect to the level of experience and expertise he presented on that occasion.

6. Conclusion

The main purpose of this paper was to try and present what it is that students pay the most attention to in presentations. I was led by an idea of forming a few guidelines for future generations, future students that might find presentations or speaking in public difficult. By observing students and noting down their comments and observations as well as having them fill out a feedback sheet I was hoping to get a clearer picture of their focus. The first step was to show the development of public speaking, rhetoric, discourse, relation between presentation and conversation. Secondly, presentation had to be looked at more thoroughly; starting with what experts say about proper ways of making and organizing a presentation and showing how does that actually work in practice. Additionally, there is also analysis of the actual data that was collected.

The reason why I decided to include the field experiences I had is that I consider them relevant to my understanding of the entire concept of presentation making. In addition, they provided me with more knowledge of students´ focus during presentations outside the class. The UN and Conference experience made it possible for me to meet a great number of students from various countries, cultures and realize that their expectations are the same. Regarding the courses I took, they provided me with more practical knowledge of how to tackle certain aspects of presentation making. On the other hand, they made me improve my own personal techniques and correct mistakes that I had been making. Realizing what was wrong and how to fix it now makes it possible for me to advise others on how to act similarly.

It can be concluded that during the semester the observed groups of students have acquired and started applying what their teachers have tried to teach them. Nevertheless, the teachers´ and students´ opinion of what should one primarily focus on seems to be somewhat different. As mentioned the most important aspects one should focus on according to professors are centering, structuring and getting the message across clearly. Results showed that students highly value body movements and knowledge while posture and voice came after in the ranking. Students did not disapprove of their professors' values; however, they did not completely follow their suggestions either.

In sum, following the ideas of Aristotle and his contemporaries and presented preferences of four observed student groups, the main aspect one should focus on when preparing a presentation for students is gesticulation closely followed by knowledge about the topic. In other words, the main focus of a presenter should be on *ethos* and then on *pathos*.
One should walk the audience through the talk presented in pictures/photographs.

7. Curriculum vitae

PERSONAL DATA

Name: Ivana Ostojic

Date of Birth: 28.09.1980

Place of Birth: Tuzla, Bosnia and Herzegovina

Nationality: Croatian

EDUCATION

1987-1995 elementary school in Tuzla

1995-1999 secondary school in Tuzla

1999-2002 University of Tuzla

2002-2010 University of Vienna, English Department

2009-2010 Diploma thesis at the University of Vienna

2009 Presentation Skills and Rhetoric courses

2010 NLP training for Trainers

WORKING EXPERIENCE

2010 Mestres for Bosnia, Interactive Schools; cooperation between schools in Barcelona and Bosnia

2010 Volkshochschule Wien (Meidling)

2005-2010 Gastronomy

2009 Internship at the United Nations Information Service, UNIS

2005-2008 Market research, Consent Vienna

2004-2008 Pernod-Ricard Vienna, Jameson Irish Whiskey promotional staff

1999-2001 OSCE Mission to Bosnia

1996-1999 Humanitarian Organisation “My Neighbour”, Mission to Bosnia

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9. Appendix

Feedback sheet

1. Please fill in the following:
a) age:
b) sex:
2. Please evaluate presentations by ticking the appropriate box according to your personal opinion.

Title of the presentation:							
	1. Excellent (Completely satisfied)	**2. Very good**	**3. Good**	**4. Fair**	**5. Not so good**	**6. Bad**	**7. Not at all satisfied**
a) Posture							
b) Eye contact							
c) Gesticulation/movement							
d) Knowledge							
e) Usage of help devices (cards, blackboard, PowerPoint etc.)							
f) Voice							

Title of the presentation:							
	1. Excellent (Completely satisfied)	**2. Very good**	**3. Good**	**4. Fair**	**5. Not so good**	**6. Bad**	**7. Not at all satisfied**
a) Posture							
b) Eye contact							
c) Gesticulation/movement							
d) Knowledge							
e) Usage of help devices (cards, blackboard,							

PowerPoint etc.)							
f) Voice							

Title of the presentation:							
	1. Excellent (Completely satisfied)	**2. Very good**	**3. Good**	**4. Fair**	**5. Not so good**	**6. Bad**	**7. Not at all satisfied**
a) Posture							
b) Eye contact							
c) Gesticulation/movement							
d) Knowledge							
e) Usage of help devices (cards, blackboard, PowerPoint etc.)							
f) Voice							

Title of the presentation:							
	1. Excellent (Completely satisfied)	**2. Very good**	**3. Good**	**4. Fair**	**5. Not so good**	**6. Bad**	**7. Not at all satisfied**
a) Posture							
b) Eye contact							
c) Gesticulation/movement							
d) Knowledge							
e) Usage of help devices (cards, blackboard, PowerPoint etc.)							
f) Voice							

3. Anything you would do differently? THANK YOU!