Oral Communication

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ICOM 5047: Computer Engineering Design
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Outline

- Introduction
- Elements of communication
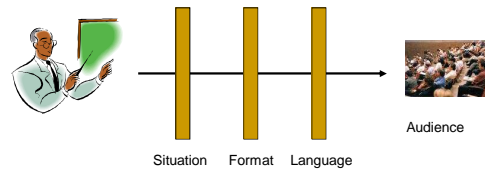- Purpose
- Audience
- Structure
- Communication Aids
- Delivery

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Exercise

- We have given you a clapper
- Each student should give a 3 min presentation on the following topic:
  - Why is my town the best town in Puerto Rico?
- When the student is presenting, clap if he or she has done something wrong in the presentation
  - Examples: stage fright, moving too much, etc.

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Communication

Situation   Format   Language   Audience

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Situation

- Particular situation within we are communicating.
  - What?
    - What is my subject?
  - Who?
    - To whom do I wish to communicate it?
  - Why?
    - What is my purpose in communicating it?
  - When and where?
    - Are there features about the place and time which affect how I should speak?
  - How?
    - What type of communication? Am I aiming at narration? Description? Exposition? Argument?

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Format

- Letter
- Email
- Application
- Presentation
- Report
- Essay
- Paper
- Dissertation
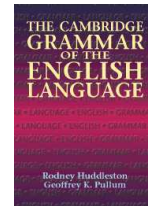- Etc.

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Format

- Letter
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- Etc.

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Language

- English
- Grammar
- Vocabulary
- Spelling
- Punctuation
- Speech

THE CAMBRIDGE
GRAMMAR
OF THE
ENGLISH
LANGUAGE

Rodney Huddleston
Geoffrey K. Pullum

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Spoken presentations

- Examples
  - Company sales
  - Training session
  - College lecture
  - Inform progress, report results
- Features
  - One or more speakers presenting information and ideas
  - Clearly defined purpose
  - An audience

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Preparation

- Careful and intelligent preparation
- Failures
  - Over-confidence
  - Lack of time
  - Laziness
- Key
  - Organization
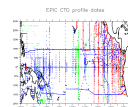
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Purpose

- Inform
- Persuade
- Entertain
- Meet and get on with your audience

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Purpose – To inform

- Provide information
  - Straight facts (data)
    - Difficult to digest
      - Figures, Dates, Names, Events
    - Put data in context, patterns, and pictures
  - Stories
    - Easier to remember
      - Pattern, beginning, middle, and end
  - Descriptions and explanations
    - Functioning of organization, machine, institution
    - Visualize what is being described
      - Images, analogies

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Purpose – To persuade

- Persuade audience of something
  - Buy my product
  - A different way of doing things
  - Agree to a course of action
- College lecture
  - Students
    - Take the subject seriously
    - Open their minds to a new way of thinking

"That's a great question. Come to think of it, I'm not sure what is is I'm trying to sell you."

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Purpose – To entertain

- Entertain the audience
- Usually a secondary purpose such as convince or persuade

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Purpose – To meet and get on with the audience

- Keep in mind
  - Continuing relationship with the audience
  - Will be meeting them regularly
- Manager
  - People he/she will be working with
- Professor
  - Students

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Audience

- Where are they now?
  - Theoretical knowledge
  - Practical knowledge
  - Intelligence
  - Level of education
  - Terminology they can handle
  - How quick can they pick up ideas
  - Concentration span

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Audience

- Expectations
  - Audience came for a reason
  - Students
    - Pass a course - compulsory
    - 8:35am
    - Not enough sleep
    - Lack of enthusiasm
    - MAKE IT INTERESTING!!!

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Audience

- Practical needs
  - Where is the screen, projector, board?
  - How is the seating arranged?
    - Can everybody see?
    - Can everybody hear?
    - Where will you place yourself? Move around?
    - Lighting?
    - Microphone?

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Audience

- Intellectual needs
  - Order in which the material is presented
  - Communication aids
    - Visual aids
    - Audio
    - Verbal aids
      - Stories, anecdotes, images, analogies, mnemonics
    - Handouts
  - Rhythm and variety to keep the audience interested and alert

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Audience

- Personal needs
  - Too long
  - Exhausting
  - Break?
    - Coffee
    - Stretch legs
    - Chat

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Build a structure

- Content
  - What you want to include?
  - How much time you have?
  - How much your audience can tackle?
- Priorities
  - Presentation soon will be forgotten
  - Select small number of key points

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Build a structure

- Ordering
  - Logic of the subject
  - Logic of learning and understanding

  Known → Unknown   Easy → Difficult

  - Need for variety
- Arrangement
  - Introduction
  - Body
  - Conclusion

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Communication Aids

- Whiteboard
  - Pros: Brainstorming, Linking ideas, Summarizing
  - Cons: Sloppy handwriting, Erase, Fixed to the wall, Complex diagram?
- Flipchart
  - Pros: No erasing, material prepared in advance
  - Cons: Cannot be used in large space
- Overhead projector
  - Pros: Everybody sees, Well prepared material, Overlaying complex diagrams built step by step
  - Cons: Alignment, Focus, Small letters, Colors (contrast)

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Delivery

- Nervous?
- What about reading prepared text?
  - Not engaging
  - Prompt cards
- Talk to your audience
  - Speak to them
    - Look at them – eye contact
  - Move around (evenly)
  - Interruptions and questions
  - Things have to be read (enough time for reading slides)
  - Pose
    - Hands, clothes
  - Voice

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References

- Houp, Kenneth W. and Thomas E. Pearsall, Reporting Technical Information, 6th edition. Macmillan Publishing Company, New York, 1988.
- Seely, John, Oxford Guide to Effective Writing and Speaking, Oxford University Press, 2005

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Questions?

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