

Evaluation of Public Speech in English

Tomoe Mega

School of Education, Waseda University

1. The purpose

The purpose of this paper is to examine what kind of speech is effective and persuasive in speech contests.

2. Procedure

Step1:

I asked the judges and audience to evaluate speeches in two English Speech Contests.

Step2:

I researched different criteria among their evaluation.

Step3:

I show what criteria should be written on evaluation sheets.

3. A case study

3.1. In my University's internal speech contest (middle-level contest)

Form of the contest

In this contest, each speaker delivers a speech within 7 minutes.

After the speech, they have a question and answer session for 3 minutes, and answer questions from the judges about the content .

Judges

There are two judges.

One is a native speaker of English who teaches English in Japan.

The other is a Japanese English teacher who has some experiences of debating at college.

Speakers

All the contestants were Waseda university students. Among them, ten speakers were chosen as the top ten.

Difference between judges and audience

There are three differences:

Unlike the audience (mostly students), the judges have a high fluency level of English.

Unlike the audience, the judges are given the manuscripts of the speech beforehand.

Unlike the audience, the judges have some discussion time for the selection of the winners.

How to evaluate: judging sheet (Appendix 2)

Firstly, each judge evaluates a speech by him/herself.

Secondly, they compare each other ' s evaluation of the speech and decide four prize winners.

The top four speakers can get the prize.

As for the audience, I gave them the following questionnaire and asked them to rank the contestants.

Questioner to audience

No.1	Name						
Contents	Title	1	2	3	4	5	
	Organization	1	2	3	4	5	
	Introduction	1	2	3	4	5	
	Body	1	2	3	4	5	
	Conclusion	1	2	3	4	5	
	Originality	1	2	3	4	5	
	Analysis	1	2	3	4	5	
	Quality of Example	1	2	3	4	5	
	English& Verbal Delivery	Grammar	1	2	3	4	5
		Choice of words	1	2	3	4	5
Pronunciation		1	2	3	4	5	
Articulation							
Intonation		1	2	3	4	5	
Stress &Rhythm		1	2	3	4	5	
Voice		1	2	3	4	5	
Speed		1	2	3	4	5	
Pause		1	2	3	4	5	
Non-Verbal &Overall Delivery		Posture	1	2	3	4	5
	Gesture	1	2	3	4	5	
	Facial Expression	1	2	3	4	5	
	Eye Contact	1	2	3	4	5	
	Confidence	1	2	3	4	5	
	Sincerity	1	2	3	4	5	

	Memorization	1	2	3	4	5
Question & Answer	To the Point	1	2	3	4	5
	Fluency	1	2	3	4	5
	Clear	1	2	3	4	5

Results of the Contest:

The rank given by judges

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
Contents	1	9	6	5	7	4	3	8	2
English & Verbal Delivery	2	8	3	7	4	6	5	9	1
Non-Verbal& Overall Delivery	1	9	8	6	5	3	7	4	2
Question& Answer	1	8	4	6	9	5	3	7	2

The final ranking by the judges seems to be related to the points of contents and question and answer sessions.

Comparison of the results

Lank (Top4)	Total Rank by Judges (Prize winners)	Rank by Audience
1	Speaker A	Speaker H
2	Speaker I	Speaker I
3	Speaker G	Speaker F
4	Speaker F	Speaker A

Priority of evaluation

: judges and audience

The audience places too much emphasis on both fluency and delivery rather than on the content. i.e., the organization and argumentation of speech.

The judges are given enough time to carefully read the manuscript of the speech beforehand.

The audience has to make a judgment on the spot while the speech is being delivered.

Topics

Speaker	Topic
Speaker A	Care service for handicapped children in Japan
Speaker B	Psychology of Japanese people
Speaker C	The importance of organ transportation.
Speaker D	Breakdown in the elementary school classroom
Speaker E	Manner of use of portable phone in the train
Speaker F	How we view people in our first impression
Speaker G	The development of cloning technology
Speaker H	The importance of her club members
Speaker I	Service for cancer children

Comparison of topics

H spoke about how precious club members are, and how she overcame her personal problem by support of friends.

F discussed how he misjudged people's character from first impression by citing his personal experience

Since these two speeches were based on easy-to-understand topics rather than socially-complicated issues, the audience easily related to the speeches.

How the topics affected the results

Unlike the audience, the judges did not evaluate Speaker H so highly.

The reason being is that her topic was relevant to the audience, but not to the judges.

3.2. In All Japan Intercollegiate English Oratorical Contest (High level contest)

Form of the contest

In the contest, each speaker delivers a speech within 7 minutes. After the speech, they have question and answer sessions for 3 minutes.

Judges

There are three judges and one questioner in the contest.

Three judges are: A. a professor and priest (a NS of English), B. an English teacher (a NS of English), and C. a bank worker who won several speech contests in the past (a NNS of English).

A questioner is a bank worker who won a speech contest in the past.

Speakers

All speakers are university students from all over Japan. Ten speakers were chosen through the selection process.

Difference between judges and audience

There are three differences:

Unlike the audience (mostly students), the judges have a high fluency level of English.

Unlike the audience, the judges are given the manuscripts of the speech beforehand.

Unlike the audience, the judges have some discussion time for the selection of the winners.

How to evaluate

Firstly, each judge evaluates a speech solely by him/herself.

Secondly, they compare each other 's evaluation of the speech and decide four prize winners.

The top four speakers can get the prize.

Topics

Speaker	Topic
Speaker A	Supporting system of company for working women
Speaker B	Working issue
Speaker C	Working issue
Speaker D	Necessity of hospice in Japan
Speaker E	To support serious disease children's dream come true
Speaker F	Domestic violence

Speaker G	Death penalty discussion in Japan
Speaker H	Education at hospital for disease children
Speaker I	Ethical problems related to terminal treatment of children
Speaker J	After school care service for handicapped children in Japan

Preferable topics

All the speakers made speeches based on current social problems rather than on their personal experience.

Personally- based topics are unlikely to be highly evaluated because of their subjective nature.

Originality of Speech

There were several topics which were very similar. (Speaker E, H, I, and J)

In this circumstance, the judges treated these topics as basically the same, and had no way but to highly evaluate the originality of the other speeches.

That is, the originality became the determining factor of judgment.

Results of Contest

Rank	Rank by judges	Rank by audience
1	Speaker C	Speaker J
2	Speaker J	Speaker E
3	Speaker A	Speaker C

Effects of English and Delivery

Since the audience made judgments based mainly on fluency, they gave Speaker E a high rating.

Relationships between “ Contents ” and “ Question and Answer session ”

The following data shows that there is a tendency for speakers with high points in Question and Answer session to receive high evaluation in contents.

4. Conclusion

Favorite (popular) topics are different depending on the level of contest, Speeches are evaluated differently between the judges and the audience depends on the topic,.

The judges and the audience give a high-priority rating to evaluation differently.

The judges attach great importance to the content of speech.

The audience attaches great importance to English and Delivery.

The originality is the key for successful speeches in contests where there are several similar topics.

Speakers who score high points in Question and Answer session get a high rating overall.

Appendix 1: An example of judging sheet

<p>Contents (90 Points)</p>	<p>Title</p> <p>Organization</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Introduction</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Body</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Conclusion</p> <p>Originality</p> <p>Analysis</p> <p>Quality of Example</p> <p>Sub Total _____ / 90</p>
<p>English&Verbal Delivery (60 Points)</p>	<p>Grammar</p> <p>Choice of words</p> <p>Pronunciation</p> <p>Articulation</p> <p>Intonation</p> <p>Stress & Rhythm</p> <p>Voice</p> <p>Speed</p> <p>Pause</p> <p>Sub Total _____ / 60</p>
<p>Non-Verbal & Overall Delivery (35 Points)</p>	<p>Posture</p> <p>Gesture</p> <p>Facial Expression</p> <p>Eye Contact</p> <p>Confidence</p> <p>Sincerity</p> <p>Memorization</p> <p>Sub Total _____ / 35</p>
<p>Question & Answer (15 Points)</p>	<p>To the Point</p> <p>Fluency</p> <p>Clear</p> <p>Sub Total _____ / 15</p>
<p>General Comments</p> <p>Judge's Signature _____ Total _____ / 200</p>	

Appendix 2: Results among judges

Speaker	JUDGE A					JUDGE B					JUDGE C				
	Contents	English& Verbal Delivery	Non-Verbal& Overall Delivery	Question& Answer	Total	Contents	English& Verbal Delivery	Non-Verbal& Overall Delivery	Question& Answer	Total	Contents	English& Verbal Delivery	Non-Verbal& Overall Delivery	Question& Answer	Total
A	3	4	4	2	3	4	4	6	3	3	2	3	3	3	2
B	5	7	3	6	6	5	5	5	7	5	6	7	7	6	6
C	2	1	2	3	2	1	1	1	2	1	1	2	1	1	1
D	7	6	6	5	5	7	7	7	6	6	7	6	6	8	7
E	4	3	5	4	4	3	2	3	4	4	4	1	4	5	4
F	6	5	7	9	7	6	6	4	5	7	5	5	5	4	5
G	8	8	8	7	8	9	8	8	10	9	8	9	9	7	8
H	10	9	9	10	10	10	9	9	9	10	9	10	10	9	9
I	9	10	10	8	9	8	10	10	8	8	10	8	8	10	10
J	1	2	1	1	1	2	3	2	1	2	3	4	2	2	3