

# **Presentation Strategies in Conference English**

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As the world becomes a global village, national conferences become more frequent, and the language of choice to mediate the exchange of information is English. Even though L2 speakers who participate international conferences or seminars paid lots of time and efforts in their studies, but others cannot understand their presentations, their studies cannot make progress as they are expected.

Accordingly, the purpose of this research is to find several methods to prepare L2 speakers for English communication at conferences. Accordingly the study for the effective conference English presentation is presented in this study. Six parts of presentation strategies in conference English are introduced. Those are :

1. Introductions of presentation 2. The informative presentation 3. The persuasive presentation 4. Referring to visuals 5. Concluding the presentation 6. Handling questions

## **1. Introductions of presentation**

Korean L2 speakers had much progress in their conversations according to changes in curriculum, from CALP(Cognitive Academic Languages Proficiency) to BISE(Basic Interpersonal Survival English). But, in international seminars or conferences, many problems of L2 speakers can be found in their presentations. Most people are afraid of making presentations in front of many people. Because of the afraid, they make their speech not organized and their audience confused. So, afraid, non-organization, and confusion can be said as three main problems in presentations.

The purpose of this research is first, to get rid of presenter's fear, second to make your audience feel why you are there and what you are going to talk about, and lastly to prepare presentation organized.

### **1.1. What to say-stating the purpose**

The main purpose or aim needs to be briefly stated in the opening part of a presentation. When L2 speakers give presentations, it is essential to have a clear idea of what they want to say. To inform their audience about essential facts or to persuade them to accept their proposals, a good introduction should include a brief statement explaining the purpose of the presentation. A desirable way to do this is doing this right at the beginning by building up gradually, leaving statements of purpose until the latter

part of the introduction. The introduction should include your statement of purpose and the information about the main points which you will develop.

## **1.2 The consolidation of the key points**

The presenter highlights the structure of her presentation by stressing these words first, then, and lastly. Notice how the presenter highlights the structure of her presentation by stressing these words first, then and lastly:

Ex 1. First □ I'll give you some background information about the LX project team.

Then □ after outlining the objectives of the team, I'll go on to examine the current organization of your European data centres.

Lastly □ I'll examine our recommendations for maximising the efficiency of those centres.

EX 2. My first point

Then...

And finally...

## **1.3 Signposting a presentation:**

Introduction should contain some kind of signposting for the audience

- (1) tell them what you will be talking about
- (2) tell them in which order you will develop your points.

In order to do that signposting will help your presentation will help you

- (1) to define the limits of the presentation
- (2) to focus the audience on the aspects of the topic you want to talk about

Here are some useful expressions for signposting a presentation

EX. I'll be developing three main points.

First, I'll give you... Second, ... Lastly..

My presentation will be in two main points. In the first part I'll...

.. And then I'll...

First, I'd like to... secondly, we can... And I'll finish with...

Extra things what I want to add is in the informative presentation:

- (1) If possible record yourself when you give the introduction.
- (2) Pay attention to the use of pauses and stress when you explain how you will develop the presentation.

### 1.4 How to create interest – Involving your audience

The L2 speakers starts their technical presentation with some unusual statistics these to engage his audience attention

Present these facts in a way that will involve the audience and make the facts easier to related to.

Ex. More than 25 percent of European flights are delayed by more than 30 minutes.

Next time you take a flight in Europe, at least one in four of you can expect delays of well over 30 minutes.

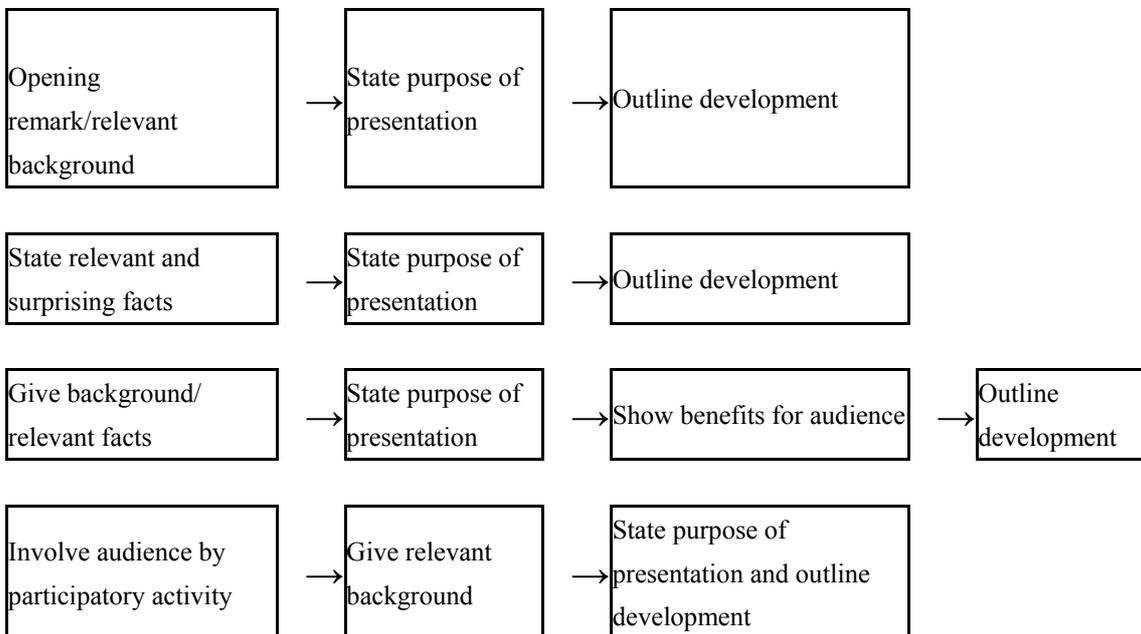
Re-write the introduction to:

- a. Make the style more personal
- b. Give the content more impact for the audience

Prepare an introduction for your own presentation. Use one of the frameworks below to help you organize your ideas.

**Table 1**

Introduction for Presentation



## 1.5 Checklist

In the introduction of your presentation, you had better check following things to make your presentation organized:

- (1) Did you explain to the audience?
  - Who you are?
  - Why you are speaking
- (2) Did you include a statement of a purpose?
- (3) Did you include a signposting?
- (4) Did you relate the presentation to the needs of the audience?
- (5) How did you involve the audience?
- (6) Did your opening remarks include:
  - a participatory activity?
  - a question to the audience?
  - surprising/ unusual fact?

## 2. The informative presentation

To make your presentation much more effective, you can signpost the route through presentation.

### 2.1 Signposting

In a longer presentation, it is useful to signpost the presentation to show where one part ends and a new one starts. This helps to orientate the audience by making the structure of the presentation clear to follow.

Here are some useful phrases and sentences for signposting.:

Ex. I'll begin by... (+verb in the ..in form)

Let's start with... (+noun)

If I could now turn to...

My next point is...

Now, turning to...

Now, what about...?

Let me now move on to

**Table 2**  
**Presentation Plan**

Part 1	Cost of sending our people to work abroad
Part 2	Reasons why so many people come back before the end of their contracts
Summary	Given high costs - very important to choose right kind of person
Part 3	Characteristics of a good assignee
Point 1	Personal attributes
Point 2	Type of work experience which is useful for jobs abroad
Summary	Completes the picture of kind of person we are looking for
Part 4	Our selection and orientation procedures

If possible, the most ideal method for presentation is to make presentation plan like Table 2. First L2 speakers make part 1, part 2,.. then, add sub-categories like point 1, point 2,... . Don't forget to add summary when they finish each part.

## 2.2 Rhetoric questions

Rhetorical questions are useful devices. They give one-way communication the appearance of a dialogue with the audience. We use a rhetoric device to build links between the various points in presentation. Rhetoric questions help the audience keep interested, and make the audience feel involved in your presentation.

Here are some examples of rhetorical questions:

Ex. Sales are down on last year - What's the explanation for this?

How can we explain for this?

What can we do about I?

How will this affect us?

What are the implications for the company? 1)

## 2.3 Contrasting statements of facts and comments

After you listed fact or trend, you'd better have some comments about them. In Table 3, there are some samples for comments.

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1) These examples are from Barnes (1943, 30), Speech Handbook

**Table 3**

## Statements of facts and comments

Fact/Trend	Comment
a. ...several customers have actually delisted Aqua-Sparkle.	Which is a very worrying trend
b. ... can be attributed to the recent sales drive in the area..	And we're confident that the performance is finally beginning to turn around
c. ... we are, in fact, ahead of our target...	this is clearly a very encouraging result

When then L2 speakers have listed the fact “. ...several customers have actually delisted Aqua-Sparkle,” they can commend like “Which is a very worrying trend.” Also they can commend about the item b, the sales trend in Table (?), “And we're confident that the performance is finally beginning to turn around.” Like this, the statements about the fact and comments help the audience understand the L2 speakers’ presentation much better.

**2.4 Checklist**

In the informative presentation, you had better check following things to make your presentation organized:

- (1) Did I state the purpose of the presentation?
- (2) Did I signpost the points to be developed?
- (3) Did I make it clear where the main points in the presentation start and end?
- (4) Did I use summaries to make the link between what has gone before and what is to follow?

**3. The persuasive presentation**

The target in persuasive presentation is to make L2 speakers’ argument clear and highlight their main ideas. To make clear the presentations of L2 speaker’s, they should build arguments by using some special vocabularies first of all. After having built arguments, the L2 speakers highlight key points in their presentation by using several methods.

**3.1 Building arguments**

Highlight the relationship between the different points you want to make by using connecting words:

- Ex. (1) To show a different argument: however, on the other hand, although. in spite of this
- (2) To show a consequence: therefore, so, consequently, because of this, as a result

- (3) To show an additional argument: moreover, in addition to this, not only...but also
- (4) Using connecting words like these will help
- (5) You to build convincing arguments
- (6) Your audience to follow your arguments, and anticipate the direction you are moving in.

### 3.2 Highlighting information

There are a number of different ways you can emphasize and highlight key points in your presentation to give out more impact, and to sound more persuasive. Here are some of them.

- (1) By stressing auxiliary verbs like is, was, were, will, has :Ex. It's costing a lot of money. -> It is costing a lot of money
- (2) With negatives put the stress on words like no or not: is not, will not :Ex. We aren't recommending any major changes.-> We are not recommending any major changes.
- (3) Changing the normal word order of a sentence :Ex. The company doesn't see any need for change.-> The company sees no need for change.
- (4) Repeating key words and ideas

We're suggesting cuts in production.-> What we're suggesting are cut in production.  
 More investment is needed not cuts in investment.-> What is needed is more investment not cuts in investment.

### 4. Referring to visuals

A good presentation which includes visuals will be much more effective than one without.

Visuals help to focus the attention of your audience and reinforce your main ideas. Furthermore to illustrate points which are hard to visualise help involve and motivate the audience

#### 4.1 Useful expressions

Here are some useful expressions to focus your audience on particular features on a visual :

- Ex. You can see the... As you/we can see.. What is interesting/important is...
- And more formally... I'd like to draw your attention to... Notice/Observe the...
- It is important/ interesting to notice that...

When you show some particular visuals, L2 speakers can use above expressions to help your presentation effective. Furthermore when L2 speakers make visuals, they should keep in minds that which are more effective for the audience to understand what

you want to say. If we compare visuals on Figure 1, the right side visual is much more easy to understand at once. The conditions of effective visuals are simple and organized for key points of the presenter’s intention.

**Figure 1**  
Effective Visuals

<p>○ ○ ○ ○</p> <p>ARGUMENTS TO SUPPORT LONDON CAMPAIGN TO STAGE THE OLYMPIC GAMES IN THE YEARS 2000</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• London has a strong tradition hosting the olympic games - already done so in 1908 and 1948.</li> <li>• There are many very well known sporting venues in the city, e.g. Wembley, Wimbledon, the Royal Albert Hall and Alexandra palace, as well as major football and stadiums.</li> <li>• The city has planned many new sporting facilities.</li> <li>• If London is the centre for the 2000 olympic games it will be an excellent public relations and making opportunity.</li> </ul>	<p>○ ○ ○ ○</p> <p><b>WHY LONDON SHOULD STAGE THE 2000 OLYMPICS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Strong Olympic tradition</b></li> <li>• <b>Many existing world famous sporting venues</b></li> <li>• <b>Many new sports facilities planned</b></li> <li>• <b>Excellent promotion for the capital</b></li> </ul>
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(Barnes, 53)

#### 4.2 Checklist

For referring to visuals, you had better check following things to make your presentation organized:

- (1) Is there any right amount of information on the visual?
- (2) Does the layout help the audience to understand the point of the visual?
- (3) Is the lettering clear and easy to read?
- (4) Did the colors you’ve used really work?
- (5) Are there any spelling or grammatical mistake?

#### 5. Concluding the presentation

When you concluding your presentation followings will help you to finish clearly.

##### 5.1 Recommendation and call for action

A persuasive presentation will after include recommendations and /or a call for action from the audience. At this stage of your presentation it would be appropriate to

distribute support documentation, folders, handouts, calculations or copies of OHP transparencies:

Ex. I've detailed cost breakdown, which I'll be passing/ handing round now.

In the folder which I'll be distributing you'll find copies of the...

A good conclusion will contain some or all of the following stages

Often a summary is needed before you give your final conclusions.

Conclusions- Often take a form or recommendation or call for action

- Often take a form of a challenge for action
- A dynamic concluding statement to reinforce your message

## **5.2 Closing formalities**

When you finish your presentation, you can add following statements to make your presentation organized:

I'd be happy to answer any questions.

If you have any questions, I'd be pleased to answer them.

I would welcome any comments/suggestions.

Thank you for your attention.

As the L2 speakers can see the examples in Table (?), using the closing formalities highlights their presentation than without any statements.

## **6. Handling questions**

Though the L2 speakers had an enthusiastic researches and successful presentations with them, if they cannot understand audience' questions in the last part of their presentations, their presentation cannot be said as successful. And the L2 speakers feel doubts about their studies. Accordingly evading difficult and hostile questions is one of the most important part in their presentations.

### **6.1 Evading difficult or hostile questions**

One way of evading difficult or hostile questions is to show your understand the questioner's position, and then to introduce an alternative way of looking at the situation.

**Table 4**  
Handling Questions

Show your understand	Introduce an alternative point of view
Yes, I quite see your point.	However, I know you'll appreciate..
Yes, it's something we've thought about a lot.	But the company..
That's an accurate observation.	On the other hand, if we consider..
I know it's difficult to accept a decision.	but the evidence is there

## 6.2 How to answer questions

Several ways of answering various questions which can be expected from audience are introduced here. Those are 'Evade by delaying,' 'Offering help to clarify information,' and 'Offer further help.'

### (1) Evade by delaying

To evade and delay the answers which are hard to reply or difficult to answer right now, L2 speakers can use following expressions:

Ex. Could we leave that till later?

That is scheduled for discussion at the next meeting.

I'm not sure this is the right place / time to discuss this particular question.

### (2) Offering help to clarify information

When responding to requests from an audience you may need to agree to a request. Followings are samples how to agree to a request pleasantly:

Ex. Q: Could we see that slide again?

A: Yes, of course/ Certainly. This is the diagram we looked at earlier.

### (3) Offer further help

To give more information or to compensate your presentation L2 speakers can say following statements:

Ex. This is the chart we looked at earlier, but perhaps it will be clearer if I show you two more charts.

Would you like to see another slide?

It might help if I spoke a little more about..

I have another transparency which gives more details about

## **7. Conclusion**

As I mentioned at the beginning of this paper, the purpose of this research is first, to get rid of presenter's fear, second to make your audience feel why you are there and what you are going to talk about, and lastly to prepare presentation organized. So in this study of six parts, we examined how to give L2 speakers' clear idea in national conferences or seminars. We studied how to make introductions of presentation, the informative presentation, the persuasive presentation, referring to visuals, concluding, and handling the questions. But the most important things in presentation is to make it organized so your audience feel why you are there and what you are going to talk about. As most people are afraid of making presentations in front of many people, if L2 speakers get rid of this fear, they can make their speech organized and make their audience not confused to the audience. Various methods are studied in this research. for L2 speakers to make their presentation understood by audience, but I think further studies are remained to make their presentation more organized and accordingly their studies make much progress.

## **References**

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