Importance of language in speech communication

USING LANGUAGE

Words are the tools of a speaker's craft. They have special uses, just like the tools of another profession. One can't drive a nail with a screwdriver or turn a screw with a hammer. It is the same with public speaking. One must choose the right words for the job you want to do.

Good speakers are aware of the meaning of words – both their obvious and their subtle meanings. They also know how to use language accurately, clearly, vividly, appropriately, and inclusively.

All words have two kinds of meanings-denotative and connotative. Denotative words are precise, literal and objective. They describe the object, person, place, idea, or event to which the word refers. On the other hand connotative words suggest of imply. These kinds of words give words their intensity and emotional power. They arouse listeners' feelings of anger, pity, love, fear, friendship, nostalgia, greed, guilt, and the like. Speakers like poets often use commutation to enrich their meaning.

Language has to also be used accurately. Using language accurately is as vital to a speaker as using numbers accurately to an accountant. Every word has shades of meaning that distinguish it from every other word.

Language must also be used clearly. People are different. What makes perfect sense to someone else may be confusing to others. A speaker must never assume that what is perfectly clear to him is clear to his audience. Listeners, unlike readers, cannot turn to a dictionary or reread an author's words to discover their meaning.

A speaker's meaning must be immediately comprehensible; it must be so clear that there is no chance of misunderstanding. One can ensure this by using familiar words, by choosing concrete words over abstract words, and by eliminating verbal clutter.

One of the biggest barriers to clear speech is using big, bloated words where short, sharp ones will do the job better. This is especially true when it comes to technical language that may be familiar to the speaker but not to the audience.

Other than being accurate and clear a speaker must always choose concrete words for his speech. Concrete words refer to tangible objects such as people, places, and things. They differ from abstract word because abstract words refer to general concepts, qualities, or attributes such as " carrot" " pencil" and many more.

To be an effective speaker one must lawn to eliminate clutter. Clutter is discourse that takes many more words than are necessary to express an idea. Clutter forces listeners to hack through a tangle of words to discover the meaning.

When one makes a speech, he must keep his language lawn and lively. It is important not to use several words where one or two would do. Flabby phrases need to be avoided. Let the ideas emerge sharply and firmly. Above all, redundant adjectives and adverbs should be watched.

One can also eliminate clutter by practicing ones speeches with a digital recorder. This will not only make one a better public speaker, but it will help

them present ideas more effectively in meetings, conversations, and group discussions.

A speaker must also be able to use his language vividly. Just as one can be accurate without being clear, so one can be both accurate and clear without being interesting. Although there are several ways to do this, two of the most important are imagery and rhythm.

Imagery can be used by speakers to make their ideas come alive. Three ways to generate imagery are by using concrete words, simile, and metaphor. Concrete words are a key to effective imagery. They enhance clarity to the speeches and they also calls up mental impressions of sight, sound, touch, smell and taste.

Another way to create imagery is through the use of simile. A simile is an explicit comparison between things that are essentially different yet have something in common. Similes clarify and vitalize ideas. For example; fit as a fiddle, hungry as a bear and busy as a bee. Such clichés are fine in everyday conversation, but one should avoid them in speechmaking.

The metaphor also brings imagery in speeches. A metaphor is an implicit comparison between things that are essentially different yet have something in common. It is an excellent way to bring colour to speech, to make abstract ideas concrete, to clarify the unknown, and to express feeling and emotions.

Rhythm is the second way of making a speech vivid. Language is a rhythm created by the choice and arrangement of words. Speakers, like poets,

sometimes seek t exploit the rhythm of language to enhance the impact of their words.

The impact of a passage can be heighted by how superb the delivery is; but even by themselves the words take on an emphatic rhythm that reinforces the message. The speaker should never emphasize sound and rhythm at the expense of meaning. The aim is to think about ways one can use the rhythm and flow of language to enhance the desired meaning.

One can develop an ear for vocal rhythm by study and practice. One can easily begin by using four basic stylistic devices employed by fine speakers to improve rhythm of the speech. These stylistic devices are parallelism, repetition, alliteration, and antithesis.

Parallelism is the similar arrangement of a pair or series of related words, phrases, or sentences. Parallelism makes a sentence clear, consistent, compelling and have progression.

Repetition is reiteration of the same word or set of words at the beginning or end of successive causes or sentences. It usually results to parallelism. Not only does it build a strong Candace, it also unifies a sequence of ideas, emphasizes an idea by stating it more than one and helps create a strong emotional effect.

Third is alliteration. This is the repetition of the initial consonant sound of close or adjoining words. By highlighting the sounds of words, alliteration catches the attention of listeners and can make ideas easier to remember. It can spruce up ones speeches, to be laughable and draw too much attention,

so that listeners get more involved in listening for the next alliteration that in absorbing the content of the speech.

Last is antithesis. This is the combination of contrasting ideas, usually in parallel structure. Antithesis has long been a favourite device of accomplished speakers, because it nearly always produces a neatly turned phrase. It is a fine way to give ones speeches a special touch of class.

The fourth way speakers can be effective is by using language appropriately. Language is to be use appropriately based on 4 factors which are; occasion, audience, topic and speaker. Language that is appropriate for some occasion may not be appropriate for others.

Appropriateness also depends on the audience. If this is kept in mind, it will help the speaker greatly when dealing with technical topics. His audience will know what he means. One should be careful to avoid language that might offend his audience. Speakers expected to elevate and polish their language when addressing an audience.

Language should also be appropriate to the topic. One wouldn't use metaphor, antithesis and alliteration when explaining how to change the tyre of a bicycle but rather use all three in a speech being given in honour of something or someone. The first topic calls for straightforward description and explanation or can evoke emotion, admiration and appreciation.

Language must lastly be appropriate to the speaker. No matter what the occasion, audience, or topic, language should also be appropriate to the speaker. Every public speaker develops his or her own language style. To say

the language should be appropriate to the speaker does not justify ignoring the need for appropriateness.

There is a difference between one's everyday styles and one's developed style as a public speaker. Accomplished speakers have developed their speaking styles over many years of trial, error, and practice. They have worked at using language effectively.

Regardless of the situation, audiences expect public speakers o use inclusive language that is respectful of the different groups that make up the society. Inclusive language is language that does not stereotype, demean, or patronize people on the basis of gender, race, religion, disability, sexual orientation, or other factors.

As a speaker you must also be able to avoid inclusive language such as generic " he" to refer to both men and women. Avoid the use of " man" for both men and women. Avoid stereotyping jobs and social roles by gender and lastly use names that groups use to identify themselves.

In conclusion a speaker must realize that language helps create the sense of reality by giving meaning to events. The words used to label an event determine to a great extent how we respond to it therefore every speaker must be careful and follow the rules of language to be effective in speech making and giving.