

## Reviving Rhetoric in English Language Teaching\*

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**Abstract:** This paper is based on the author's experience in undertaking a workshop class on Rhetoric in Business Communication. Awareness of the role of rhetoric is envisaged to develop the students' English competence by enabling them to grasp the principles of speechmaking and their various types such as speech to inform, speech to persuade, and speech to activate. They are to familiarize themselves with the forms and contents that make up a particular text of speech. The students are initially trained to be capable of understanding appropriate textbuilding. Based on their prior familiarity with some good practices in speechmaking, subsequently they are to create their own text of speech. In classes conducted in a workshop-format type, they are assigned and assisted to prepare a particular speech type of their choice using any local content from their immediate surroundings to be delivered in front of the audience. To make sure that they do really get good examples of some speeches, relevant videocasts were initially selected from online sources to give them sufficient exposure to some initial stages of preparing a speech up to its moments of accomplishment in the form of speech delivery. Such instructional activities equip the students not only with the rhetorical principles of speechmaking but also with some practical skills of speechmaking relevant and beneficial in their local contexts.

**Key words:** Rhetoric in ELT, rhetoric and language skills, mastery of text-building

### Introduction

On my recent class called "Rhetoric in Business Communication", my students were taught to be able to grasp the principles of rhetoric or speechmaking in general in the initial stages. Subsequently they were expected to apply such knowledge in the practical skills of preparing their own texts of speech focusing on a particular business issue, and then get ready to deliver them to the designated audience. To the best of my knowledge, such classes are only best conducted in a workshop format of class activity. As the name of the course indicates, the students are to familiarize themselves with the principles of rhetoric and then use their knowledge in the practical skills of speechmaking – including writing and delivering the speech. So the basic tenets of speechmaking – mastery of the textbuilding of a particular speech and the successful and convincing delivery of the text as a public speaker – are to be the objectives. This paper argues that the knowledge of rhetoric comprising both the knowledge of textbuilding and the practical skills of speech delivery are two sides of the same coin of the course "Rhetoric in Business Communication" that the students are to undergo. These two sides are reflected in the aims and instructional activities that are directed to achieve the goals: firstly, the knowledge of textbuilding; secondly, the skills of speech delivery.

### Theoretical Basis

The rhetorical Triangles: Presenter, audience, and Subject

As background knowledge to the students, it would be beneficial to familiarize them with the types of speechmaking they are to focus on, i.e. speech to inform and speech to persuade. The aims of the former is to get across some information and the later is, in addition to getting across some information, to persuade the audience aiming at altering their beliefs, values or attitudes (Beebe & Beebe, 2005:399).

Material Developments in ELT

For the course "Rhetoric in Business Communication" that I was assigned to teach, I relied on tailor-made course pack consisting of videocasts on speech samples and practical guides on

speech to inform, speech to persuade having been selected from you tube to accompany relevant parts of textbooks on both issues (Beebe & Beebe, 2009:25-41,1125-134, 197-203, 220-233). The tailor-made materials were inspired by Tomlinson and Masuhara (2010: 252) who underscore the invaluable experience that english teachers may gain as they are involved in locally designed materials and use them to cater for the particular needs and wants of specific groups of real target students. Cahyono (Ed., 2010) also provides impetus for local English teachers to make good use of internet resources to develop tailor-made teaching materials.

### Teaching procedures

- **Pre-teaching** (refer to Appendix 1)

Initially, the students are to recognize their would-be audience. The instructor can briefly introduce and provide examples of some important points as follows:

<b>Considering the Audience</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gather &amp; analyze information about audience.</li> <li>• Consider culturally diverse backgrounds of audience.</li> <li>• Adapt speech to particular audience.</li> </ul>
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<b>Select &amp; Narrow the Topic</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Who will be hearing your speech?</li> <li>• What is the occasion (event)?</li> <li>• What are your interests, talents &amp; experiences</li> </ul>
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<b>Topic</b>	..... ( <i>Shopping at a traditional market</i> )
<b>General Purpose</b>	..... ( <i>To inform or To persuade</i> )
<b>Specific Purpose</b>	At the end of my speech, the audience will be able to identify
<b>Central Idea:</b>	..... ( <i>the benefit of shopping at a traditional market</i> ) ..... ( <i>Shopping at traditional market has a lot benefit</i> )

<b>Types of General Purposes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To inform or to persuade? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Inform: ..... (<i>teach, define or clarify</i>)</li> <li>✓ Persuade: .... (<i>change or strengthen beliefs, values or attitudes</i>)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
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<b>Speech Organization</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The students are to familiarize themselves with the speech that it consists of 3 broad divisions of speech organization – <b>introduction, body, and conclusion</b></li> </ul>
<b>Generate Main Ideas and providing supporting details</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify how speech will logically divide as main ideas.</li> <li>• Provide supporting details for the main ideas.</li> </ul>

- **Whilst-teaching**

<b>Whilst-teaching</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Well-selected videocasts of speeches can become good models pertaining to the choice of content and that of expression. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ In the case of “speech to inform”, the students are to watch the videocast entitled “How to start your own T-shirt Business” (Ross, n.d.)</li> <li>✓ In the case of “speech to persuade”, they are to watch the videocast entitled “Putting the Brakes on the Teenage Driving” (Anonymous, n.d.; see also the accompanying transcript in Appendix 2)</li> </ul> </li> <li>• The students are to watch thoroughly a particular selected videocast. After that, they are to listen to the speech for the second time by simulateously examining its text.</li> </ul>
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- **Post-teaching**

- The students are to work on an individual basis to prepare their own text with the assistance of the instructor in the workshoplike class instruction.
  - ✓ The students are to recognize that the speech they are to prepare consists of
    - ❖ Introduction
    - ❖ Body, and
    - ❖ Conclusion
  - ✓ The students are to focus and write the content part first. Quite relevant is to teach the students to write the main ideas and their accompanying supporting details.
  - ✓ Soon afterward they are to complete their text by providing the introduction and conclusion parts by referring to the rhetoric videocast entitled “Great Opening and Closing” (Riegel, n.d.)
- Having completed their own text of speech, the students are to deliver the speech in front of the class applying some good practices of speechmaking that have been brought to be their focus of attention.

**Reflection**

Having watched the videocasts on both “How to start your own T-shirt Business” as a speech to inform (Cartess, n.d.) and “Putting the Brakes on the Teenage Driving” as a speech to persuade (Anonymous, n.d.), the students’ familiarity with the rhetorical principles of both types as also stated by Beebe & Beebe (2005 & 2009) became more complete. The remaining time after the students accomplish their respective speech writing is to coach them to be able to deliver them.

**5. Conclusion**

This paper has demonstrated that whatever means available in the surroundings of skilful English teachers can be benefitted to prepare their tailor-made teaching materials to better cater for the special needs of their students. Teachers can combine sources of materials both from the library and internet for the theoretical guides and from you tube for speech samples, enabling the students to build up and strengthen their rhetorical skills.

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## Appendix 1

### Keep Shopping at Traditional Market, Why Not ???

#### Introduction

Good morning Ladies and Gentlemen, I am glad to be here to meet you all. In this lovely morning, I just want to give a short speech on traditional markets which are becoming less attractive to many Indonesians because of the existence of modern markets.

In this era where globalization keeps spreading out, there is a change in the patterns of consumption and culture in society, especially for Indonesians. Many people no longer shop at traditional market. They prefer modern markets like supermarkets that are available everywhere.

Many people think that shopping at modern market is more profitable and classy than shopping at traditional market. However, shopping at traditional market can actually be more beneficial for us.

#### Body

Well, now let us see the benefits that we can get from shopping at traditional market :

##### 1. Interpersonal relation between buyers and sellers

First of all, shopping at traditional market is more alive than when we are shopping at modern market because there is an interaction or interpersonal relation between the seller and buyer. In traditional market, buyer can bargain with the seller about the price, amount, and so on. Therefore, there is a sense of familiarity between seller and buyer. When we are shopping at modern market, we are unable to interact with the salesclerks. To know the price of the product, we can just see the price tag that is listed on the products. Also, we can't bargain the price of the product because it has the fixed price. We can directly see the different situation between traditional market and modern market.



Traditional market



Modern market

##### 2. Commodity

The second benefit is commodity. Food stuffs and fruits traded in traditional market and modern market have many types and variants. However, there are several kinds of fruits especially seasonal fruits that are difficult to find such as Pineapple and fresh mangos. At traditional market, you can find those seasonal fruits because those fruits are often available there.

##### 3. Cheaper Price

The next benefit is of course cheaper price. Prices at traditional market are definitely cheaper than those in supermarket. In the supermarket we have to pay for the value added taxes which are included in the price of each item. Also because many stuffs are imported from overseas, so that the price of stuffs will become more expensive plus the cost of shipping. While in the traditional market, we don't have to pay the value added taxes or shipping costs from overseas like in supermarket because all of stuffs in traditional market are from the local places. That's why the price of stuffs in supermarket is much more

expensive than that in traditional market. For example: the price of a mango in traditional market is around Rp 2,500. While in modern market, it is around Rp 5,000. You can see the price difference that is quite a lot. Twice more expensive than the price in traditional market.

#### **4. Respect for local products**

Shopping at traditional market is also an evidence of our respect for Indonesia. As we know, most fruits and vegetables in modern market are imported from other countries. Meaning that if we buy those imported fruits or vegetables, we respect and trust more on the other countries' products than our local products. By buying food stuffs in traditional market, we can show that we are more proud of our local products.

#### **5. Promote the Economy in Indonesia**

Ladies and Gentlemen, by buying local products and food stuffs in traditional market we can also promote the economy in Indonesia. As we know, one of the most important problems in our country is poverty. Many people in Indonesia still live in poverty. If we shop at traditional market we can help the sellers there to get profit from their merchandise. Thus, we can also improve the economy in Indonesia.



#### **Conclusion**

I know there are still many shortcomings of traditional market especially in terms of cleanliness. Many people tend to shop in modern market because of its cleanliness and comfort. While most people assume that all traditional markets are dirty and uncomfortable. But it is a matter of our willingness to continue support the traditional markets so that the government can pay more attention to the cleanliness and worthiness of traditional markets as one of the public facilities that support the economic activities in Indonesia.

Actually there are some traditional markets which are dirty; but not all of them are dirty. Traditional market is not only related to something dirty and inconvenient. There are several traditional markets that are very clean and convenient. For example, the traditional markets in Cikarang Bekasi or in Serang. The traditional markets in Cikarang and Serang are very clean and orderly. It is a challenge for us to make traditional markets in our town or city to be like that. It is possible for us to make it real in our town.

We should not underestimate traditional market because by shopping at traditional market, we can build the familiarity between Indonesian societies, we can save money, we can improve the economy in Indonesia, and also as a form of our love for local products from Indonesia. So Ladies and Gentlemen, our job now is to improve the quality of traditional market together by shopping there. Therefore, we can see the better future of all traditional markets in Indonesia.

Thank you very much for your time and attention. And if you have any question, I will be more than happy to answer your question.

(Prepared & Presented by Agnes Kiong)

## Appendix 2

### Putting the Brakes on Teenage Driving

#### Introduction

1. On a chilly November night, a Ford Explorer charged down a California highway.
  1. The 16-year-old driver and three of his friends were returning from a concert when the driver lost control of the car.
  2. The driver and one passenger were killed; the other two passengers were severely injured.
  3. One of the passengers was my nephew, who will be in a wheelchair for the rest of his life.
2. Tragic auto accidents involving teenage drivers are much too common in all parts of the United States.
3. After researching the subject, I have come to agree with the experts that the best way to prevent such accidents is to raise the age for full driving privileges to 18.
4. I know from my audience-analysis questionnaire that most of you oppose such a plan, but I ask you to listen with an open mind while we discuss the problems associated with teenage driving, the major causes of the problems, and a plan that will help solve the problems.

#### Body

1. There are too many motor vehicle accidents, deaths, and injuries involving teenage drivers.
  1. According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, while teenagers make up 7 percent of the nation's licensed drivers, they represent 14 percent of all motor vehicle fatalities.
  2. Last year alone 8,666 people were killed in automobile accidents involving teenage drivers—almost exactly the number of full-time students on this campus.
  3. Evidence also shows that the younger the driver, the greater the risk.
    1. According to the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety, 16-year-olds have “the highest percentage of crashes involving speeding, the highest percentage of single-vehicle crashes, and the highest percentage of crashes with driver error.”
    2. USA Today reports that 16-year-olds are three times more likely to be involved in fatal crashes than are other drivers.

(TRANSITION: Now that we've seen the extent of the problem, we can explore its causes.)
2. There are four major causes of the problem.
  1. One of the causes is inexperience.
    1. New drivers haven't had enough time on the road to develop their driving skills.
    2. Of course, inexperience is not the only cause, since there will always be inexperienced drivers—even if the driving age were raised to 21 or even to 25.
  2. A second cause is revealed by brain research.
    1. Findings from the National Institute of Mental Health show that the brain of an average 16-year-old has not developed to the point where he or she is able to judge the risk of a given situation.
    2. A five-year study of traffic records by Steven Lowenstein, a medical professor at the University of Colorado, shows that “deliberate risk-taking and dangerous and aggressive driving behaviors predominated” among 16-year-old drivers.
  3. A third cause of motor vehicle fatalities among teenage drivers is night driving.
    1. According to the Washington Post, when 16-year-olds get behind the wheel after dark, the likelihood of having an accident increases several times over.
    2. Nighttime driving is less safe for everyone, but it becomes particularly dangerous when combined with a younger driver's inexperience and reduced ability to gauge risk.
  4. A fourth cause of accidents is the presence of teenage passengers in the car.
    1. We all know what it's like to drive with friends in the car, the stereo up loud, cell phones ringing, everyone laughing and having a good time.
    2. Unfortunately, all these factors create distractions that too often result in accidents, injury, and death.

3. Allan Williams, chief scientist at the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety, reports that one teenage passenger doubles the risk of a fatal crash, while the risk is five times greater with two or more passengers.

(TRANSITION: The extent of the problem is clear. So, too, are its major causes. What steps can we take to help bring about a solution?)

3. There are three major steps we can take to solve the problem.
  1. First, we need a national policy that no one can receive a learner's permit until age 16 and no one can receive full driving privileges until age 18.
    1. This will give 16-year-olds time to gain more driving experience before having an unrestricted license.
    2. It will also allow them to reach a stage of brain development where they are better able to handle the risk and responsibility of driving.
  2. Second, we need to restrict nighttime driving so as to keep younger drivers off the road when conditions are riskiest.
    1. Some states have tried to address this problem by banning teenagers from driving after midnight or 1 a.m., but as the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety reports, these laws don't go far enough.
    2. According to the Institute, we need a 9:00 p.m. or 10:00 p.m. limit until drivers reach the age of 18.
  3. Third, we need to limit the number of teenage passengers in cars driven by younger drivers.
    1. Kevin Quinlan of the National Transportation Safety Board states that "passenger restriction is the first and foremost measure you can take" to reduce teenage driving fatalities.
    2. According to Quinlan, new drivers age 17 or younger should not have any passengers unless the riders are adults or family members.
    3. Drivers from age 17 to 18 should not be allowed to carry more than one teenage passenger.
  4. This plan might sound harsh or inconvenient, but it is a necessary step.
    1. The evidence is clear that it would save a significant number of lives.
    2. What's truly harsh, says one father whose 17-year-old son died in an accident, is "being awakened at 2:30 in the morning by the State Patrol telling you that your son's just been killed."

### **Conclusion**

1. This year alone several thousand teenage drivers won't live long enough to attend college.
2. There is no way to solve all the problems we encounter on the road, but we can do something to help save the lives of younger drivers and to make the road safer for all of us.
3. My plan may seem harsh or inconvenient, but I know my nephew would gladly trade both for the chance to walk again.

(Retrieved Apr. 30, 2013 from [http://esc.wichita.edu/c111/html2/15\\_teen\\_driving.html](http://esc.wichita.edu/c111/html2/15_teen_driving.html))