

# *Graphical Design in Public Speaking*

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**Abstract:** *This paper aims at presenting some new and futuristic insights into public speaking from the point of view of the modern means of speech delivery and contemporary graphic methods that help communicating new information. The new graphic methods represent an easier way of communication for both the sender and the receiver. This article discusses not only the methods and techniques of speech delivery, but also their efficiency in capturing the public's attention and in mastering new information. At the same time, it takes into account the impact and the efficiency of a well-built and structured speech that is delivered to a specific audience that needs action and interaction, i.e. children. With the ever-growing evolution of technology, we can talk about digital public speaking, which is the art of speaking using digital multimedia, such as images, audio, and video. This paper is very useful in changing the perspective on the role of public speaking and, in a more specific way, on the teaching methods in the digitalised era.*

**Keywords:** *communication design, audience, graphic design, public speaking, speech delivery*

## **1. Introduction**

Studies on the ability to attract the receivers' attention during a speech show that the sender can capture their attention more easily if, during

the delivery of the speech, the receivers' senses are stimulated. In other words, you need to simultaneously add to your speech the multimedia transmission: images, sound, and motion. In the case of public speaking, it is necessary to involve emotions and feelings as much as the context allows.

Unlike traditional communication, the added visual support relying on the graphic representation of the message has the specific purpose of amplifying the impact of the message. Also, the communication design involves the assignment of meanings to images and the interpretation of the whole semantic ensemble as a part of a communicational process that is more complex. Therefore, in the digital era, the sender will not focus just on building and delivering the written message, but also on the graphic representation of the new communication. An image that resonates with the target audience can elicit joy, appreciation, sadness, shock, fear, or anger. Through the power of a visual message, the content is more likely to reach the audience.

## **2. Research methods**

This paper presents two research methods:

a) The comparative analysis was carried out by studying the methods related to teaching the public speech in public schools vs private schools, during a limited period of time of 45 minutes. The goal of this comparative analysis was to find the usage of the graphic methods of the public speech in different environments as well as the obtained results.

Therefore, the following elements have been taken into consideration:

- The level of interaction with the audience.
- The level of the receiver's attention through the entire speech.
- The receiver's reaction to the message delivered by speech.

b) The quantitative analysis was carried out by using a questionnaire about the learning styles. The following elements have been taken into consideration:

- The respondent's expectations as far as the delivery methods are concerned.
- The way in which we can assimilate the new information at an individual level.

## 2.1 Methods and techniques of public speech delivery

The following example is part of a category of the comparative analysis of public speech delivery methods, the result being the effect that the message has on the receivers.

The first category of receivers, the children in the public schools, had mastered the theoretical level of a set of information about feelings. The second category experienced feelings with the help of the senses. The method of delivery for the first category was the verbal message accompanied by a worksheet.



Figure 1: Verbal message accompanied by a worksheet

The method of delivery for the second category was the verbal message accompanied by a lesson with an object. This method refers to the use of additional helping tools that can support the verbal message. This is a widely used method in public speech delivery in the educational field. The mostly used method, the cube, will be taken as an

example. A situation with many perspectives, allowing questions and a complex approach of a subject. The following steps are recommended: building a cube that has the following words written on the sides: describe, compare, analyse, associate, apply, and argue. This method helps both the receiver and the sender. In this example, the cube was accompanied by coloured balls that represent the basic feelings. Every receiver received a ball that represented a feeling and then proceeded to analyse it with the cube as homework.



Figure 2: Coloured balls

The surprising element (a guest or a reward):

This method is considered as one of the most effective methods in capturing the public's attention and in maintaining the thrill if well-prepared. Used mainly in the educational environment, it consists of the introduction in the speech, at a very well-planned moment, of a secret guest or of a reward. This method has a purpose and that is to give meaning to the information during the speech. In my example, the surprise had been announced at the beginning and was left for the end with the goal of maintaining the children's attention during the whole lesson. At the end of the lesson, the audience enjoyed "Joy", the main character of the blockbuster movie *Inside Out*. "Joy" measured the children's joy in the room with the help of an emotional thermometer.

### 3. Visual support

#### 3.1 Visual support as text for the public speech designed for children

As it has been presented at the beginning of this paper, the classical approach involves worksheets with much more space for text. In what follows, different modern perspectives on delivering the speech in an active way will be presented.

Depending on the children's age, when delivering the public speech, nicely-coloured materials in the shape of a book or a brochure, being represented by a funny character or a nice mascot, are recommended. In this case, "Noni's feelings" book series was used, the main character being a unicorn that experiences different states that can be presented to the children. The graphics are very modern, printed in an A6 format, so that they could be easily handled by the children.



Figure 3: Noni's feelings

There are many types of books or educational brochures for children, depending on their age or their subject of interest. Some of these have an interactive content using 3D, inks, or codes that children can decode using their mobile phone (D'Vari & RoAne, 2005, p. 32).

### 3.2 Visual support based on a video

In the digital era, video materials have a significant meaning for the public speech delivery. Video materials also have a big contribution on specialised platforms (YouTube, Vimeo, etc.) or for production companies (Disney, Pixar, Marvel). The short video materials that are introduced in the public speech addressed to children can be the most useful way to deliver a message that they could understand. The association with the characters, the dynamics, or the graphics make the video material a key component to the public speech in this digital era. There are many categories of video materials that can be used in public speaking with an educational goal depending on the topic chosen for discussion -

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XIBIVNtzymU>.

### 3.3 Visual support based on PowerPoint

When the sender turns to a media support for the presentation, s/he usually uses PowerPoint, Prezi, or Keynote. But no matter what programme s/he uses, there are some general rules that must be applied in order to have a good material.



Figure 4: Slideshow 1

In what follows, the PowerPoint slide will be taken as an example. For a clear delivery, that is easily understood from the first seconds, there are a few important rules that need to be followed:

#### Conceptualising the message

It is important to mention the fact that the PowerPoint presentation does not represent the whole message, but only a visual representation of the message (Duarte, 2012, p. 9). As a matter of fact, the slides represent the transposition of the written/verbal message into a concept. The analogy in between the slides and the road signs are perfect for understanding the replacement phenomenon in the public speech, with several slides. To avoid the substitution of the speech with a presentation, it is important to emphasise the fact that, during the delivery of the speech, the attention is moved from the speaker to the visual representation just for a few seconds. It is worth highlighting the fact that it is not recommended to transpose the text message on slides, but to conceptualise and transpose it into relevant images. The visual concept could be graphically expressed through a popcorn machine doing its thing. Nowadays, in the presentation, we can use symbols instead of classical photographs.

### One idea, one slide

The text limitation involves the concentration of the message in one representative image. The display of the items one by one, but also the succession of the slides to show the idea bring rhythm and dynamics to the public speech. The strategy is to focus the attention on a successive way: image, words. Therefore, it is recommended to show the constitutive elements one by one on the slide (Wilder, 2008, p. 46). A piece of information that appears on the screen and is presented afterwards in words is already expired! It is also useful to use introductory elements on the slides as if directing a play in which the actors enter, perform, and then leave the stage.

### Colours, shapes, fonts

As far as the topic for discussion is concerned, the coordination of visual elements in between them is made by using one or two shapes at the most, complementary colors, and classical fonts. It is recommended to use the same font in maximum three dimensions (for the title, the big one, for the main idea, the medium one, and for the content, the normal one). Finally, an important role is given to the movement of the images through animations and transitions (Slideshare, 2011).

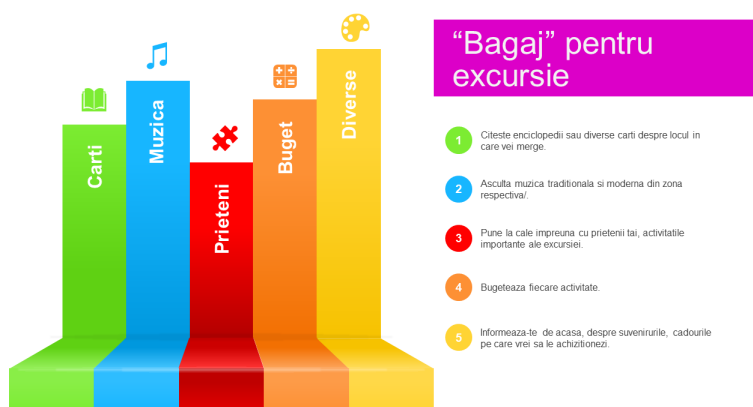


Figure 5: Slideshow 2



### **3.4 Visual support based on GIFs or funny illustrations**

The GIF is a new, modern, and efficient way of capturing and maintaining the children's attention during the public speech. GIF comes from the expression Graphics Interchange Format; it is made up of 8 bits and has a blush wheel of 256 different shades. It is considered a useful tool, especially in the public speech addressed to children. It has a small format, the messages are conveyed and understood easily and, more importantly, they are funny. GIFs can be made by two methods: a series of static images that are continually repeated, creating the movement impression or a short sequence of a video recording repeating endlessly. GIFs can be used to mark a funny moment during the speech. They are useful in the humoristic field of the speech construction and delivery. Another way of expressing the funny message can be done through the illustrations known as *Meme*. It represents a concept or slogan that is quickly spread through the social media. They are usually found as an image, GIF, or video.

And, finally, another useful tool is video animation. This is a short material that can convey a powerful message. The video animation is a project based on audio and visual communication, but also based on the sequential design. The elements that build the animations can be the scenes linked by chronological events. Animations are made by several media elements structured by a specific time frame (<https://medium.com/designers-notebook/12-secrets-graphic-designers-dont-want-you-to-know-4fb258fd0dd0> accessed April 6 2020).

### **4. Developed materials**

Based on these methods, the following graphical design, useful when working with children, was obtained.

The materials were created with Adobe Illustrator and Adobe InDesign graphic editing programmes. While creating the "Adventures in VIP Land" workbook and the mascot, a palette of primary colours, predominantly yellow, that are attractive for children, was used. The

fonts are Futura book for text, Grinched for title and Jingle bells for cover. The concept and the movements of the mascot were created on the round structure.



Figure 7: Developed materials 2



Figure 8: Developed materials 3

The created materials are intended to capture and maintain the children's attention, the interaction with them but also to understand the message sent in a dynamic and contemporary way.

### Conclusions

In the digital age, people's attention and focus have changed considerably. After carrying out this analysis, it can be seen that the visual content gets messages across faster. This happens because it is easier for people to understand something that is represented visually. Taking into account the analysis results, one can understand the importance of the visual impact for public speaking by increasing the interest for the message and the audience's involvement in the message. The communication design is one of the important communication processes. This involves a creative and systematic plan to solve a problem or to reach some objectives using images and symbols which, at one point, may be a substitute for words. It is about the visual communication and the esthetic expression of ideas and concepts using many possible elements and graphical images.

The best practices for the graphical representation are the use of a soft presentation tool as support for the verbal message, the conceptualisation and representation of images, the use of video materials or short animations to underline ideas, and the use of tint, illustrations and diagrams in the learning process.

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