



Undergraduate assignment feedback form

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<i>For completion by marker:</i> <i>Comments:</i>	
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English Oral Presentation

Good afternoon Mr Zhang, Miss Deng, good afternoon everyone. I'm Yirong. Today my presentation topic is The Cultivation of Civilized Speech.

I will divide my presentation into the following parts: the preface, how to cultivate civilized speech, the impact of civilized speech, self-reflection, and the conclusion.

Now, let's begin with the preface.

As we all know, it is very important to speak with good manners. There are four subjects in Confucius' teaching, which are virtue, speaking, politics, and literature. It is also mentioned in the Analects of Confucius: One sentence can make a country prosper, and one sentence can also make a country perish.¹「一言而可以興邦,一言而可以喪邦」 Therefore, whether a sentence is right or wrong has great impact. *Dizigui* says: "Cunning, deceptive speech and foul language should never be used. We should never conduct ourselves in an unruly manner."²「奸巧語,穢污詞,

¹ 李炳南 [Li Bingnan], ed. 論語講要 [Lunyu Jiangyao], (Taipei: Caituanfaren huazangjingzong honghua jijinhui, 2018), p.535.

² Guidelines for Being a Good Person, trans. by Pure Land Translation Team (Toowoomba: Pure Land College Press,

市井氣，切戒之」 Speaking is the most frequent interaction among people. Therefore, if a person's speech is civilized, then unconsciously, in the conversation, the person's temperament can be improved. Conversely, if a person speaks carelessly, they may create many obstacles in life.

So, what is the standard of civilized speech?

First, don't speak against the truth. Speak according to the teachings of the ancient saints and sages and according to the truth. Confucius said:

「述而不作，信而好古」 meaning “transmit and not make, believe in and love the ancients.”³ Here, it is referring to the words and teachings of saints and sages, so we should transmit their words and not make up our own. The sages speak cautiously, and what they say is in line with the ancients' teachings, and they will not speak according to their own thoughts. Believe in and love the ancients, means we should have 100% confidence in the teachings of the sages, and have no doubts, because the teachings of our ancestors are the truth that has been passed down for five thousand years. So speak with caution. For example, I once heard someone talking and said that it doesn't matter what industry you are in, as long as you can make money. Will this statement mislead the public?

2009), p.19.

³ 李炳南 [Li Bingnan], ed. 論語講要 [Lunyu Jiangyao], (Taipei: Caituanfaren huazangjingzong honghua jijinhui, 2018), p.261.

Of course! "A *junzi*, or gentleman, loves money but he acquires wealth by the proper way"⁴ 「君子愛財，取之有道」, so all words must be cautious.

Second, don't criticize people. If we are in the habit of criticizing others, it means that we are arrogant. And if you often like to criticize, you will hurt other people's hearts. Besides, in this era, for many things "we don't know how difficult it is." How easy is it to achieve something good? not easy. Many people take the initiative to give, but as a result, they not only do not receive praise, but also a lot of criticism. This approach will make them very sad. Not only that, but it also affects the morale of the team. If the leader is criticized, the whole group loses its cohesion and its confidence in the leader, and the group may fall apart. What kind of people did Confucius say is the most hateful? "Hated are men who, being in a low station, slanders his superiors."⁵ 「惡居下流而訕上者」, it will have a bad influence. Instead of criticizing the leader, what about criticizing a colleague? When you criticize this colleague, will other people not distrust him after hearing it? The harmony of the team will be destroyed. So a single sentence can destroy a country, just as a team can fall apart if people are criticizing each other.

⁴ 因緣生 [Yinyuanshen], comp. 聖學根之根 [Shengxue Genzhigen], (Taipei: Shijie shuju, 2015), vol. 3, p. 30.

⁵ 李炳南 [Li Bingnan], ed. 論語講要 [Lunyu Jiangyao], (Taipei: Caituanfaren huazangjingzong honghua jijinhui, 2018), p.762.

Third, our actions should be consistent with what we say. If we want to do this, first of all our minds cannot be impetuous. Generally speaking, people who talk less tend to be calmer. There is an old Chinese saying: Auspicious people don't talk much, but impetuous people talk a lot. Therefore, when we speak, we should think first, and think carefully, even a few times, before speaking. More importantly, don't bring emotions into your speech, and be calm. This is the correct attitude for speaking. If we don't adjust our state of mind, we just want to say a few more words, then we may regret what we say.

Fourth, we cannot speak too fast. *Dizigui* says: "When speaking, say each word unhurriedly, clearly, and correctly. Do not mumble or talk too fast."⁶

「凡道字，重且舒。勿急疾，勿模糊」 Nowadays, many people generally speak faster, and the other party does not understand, but they are embarrassed to ask again, which may cause trouble to the other party. Therefore, speaking more and speaking quickly are mostly signs of impatience. Since we are speaking to the other party, we need to make it clear what we are saying. If we are talking very fast when talking to someone, and the other person can't understand, just making an excuse for ourselves and telling them that the speed of my speech is like this. If

⁶ Guidelines for Being a Good Person, trans. by Pure Land Translation Team (Toowoomba: Pure Land College Press, 2009), p.20.

we do this, we are inconsiderate of the other person. Therefore, we should observe the other person's situation at all times.

We should also pay attention to the time and place of speech. We should praise others for their good deeds in public, but not publicly point out the faults of others. 「揚善於公堂，規過於私室」 If we want to remind others of their mistakes, don't do it in public. Because it would make the person being reminded feel ashamed and embarrassed. We can help them point out their mistakes when we are alone with them.

At the same time, we remind others that it is based on the trust they have in us. Because we can remind them only if they trust us. Otherwise, misunderstanding will result. When you meet someone for the first time, you immediately point out this mistake, that mistake. People will misunderstand and say, do you not like me? So trust is important. How does one gain trust? Your behavior makes them admire you, and you often care about them and help them. Thus, trust is established. When we have not yet established good trust with a person, we can not have in-depth conversations. These are all things we need to learn. When we know what can and cannot be said, it will make people feel very touched and admire us.

What are the effects of speech?

When we can often take this into consideration, naturally we won't talk carelessly. The saying goes: "disaster comes from the mouth" 「禍從口出」, this is talking about the influence.

Including the saying "the scar on the body cut by a sharp blade is easy to heal" 「利刃割體痕易合」. If we are cut by a knife, we only need a period of rest and the wound will heal, but "the harm of bad words to people will be difficult to eliminate" 「惡語傷人恨難消」, maybe just one sentence, they will remember it for a lifetime, and trouble you for a lifetime. These are all influences of speech, which should be taken into consideration. We sometimes only care about our own pleasure, not knowing that the side effects may be difficult to deal with.

Therefore, speaking is an important skill in self-cultivation. In fact, what is the essence of self-cultivation? It's to repair our hearts. "Words are the voice of the heart." 「言為心聲」 A person's words are the voice of their hearts. If they have bad intentions, how can they say something good even if they want to? When we are talking to a person, we can perceive the motivation of their speech through their words, and then understand the intention of this person. When our hearts are relatively calm, the words we speak will naturally make people feel comfortable. Moreover,

words and hearts influence each other. When the words we speak are inappropriate, it also shows that our hearts are disturbed.

Here I would like to share a case of my own with you. Because my personality is relatively anxious, so I speak directly, and many times it will cause harm to others because of my speech. Some time ago, when I was communicating with a classmate, I only thought about myself when I spoke, and didn't consider whether he could understand or not, and his facial expression became more and more confused. At this time, I realized that my speech was too serious and I didn't think about him. I didn't go on when I noticed his expression. I changed the tone of my speech to sound softer. After I softened my tone, I saw his expression become more and more relaxed. After this incident, I also realized that the cultivation of speech is really reflected in all aspects of life, which not only has an impact on individuals, but also has a great impact on communities and even the country. So, I also remind myself that I need to start practicing from this point and actually do it.

In conclusion, when we realize the importance of speaking, we can pay more attention to speech and then we can really train ourselves in our daily life, focusing on the mind. In our daily life, we can often focus on our hearts and our speaking. When we can really do so, we can have

positive impact on ourselves, our community, and our society.

That concludes my presentation. Any feedback and suggestions will be appreciated. Thank you for listening patiently!

Bibliography

1. Guidelines for Being a Good Person, trans. by Pure Land Translation Team (Toowoomba: Pure Land College Press, 2009)
2. 李炳南 [Li Bingnan], ed. 論語講要 [Lunyu Jiangyao], (Taipei: Caituanfaren huazangjingzong honghua jijinhui, 2018)
3. 因缘生 [Yinyuanshen], comp. 聖學根之根 [Shengxue Genzhigen], 7 vols (Taipei: Shijie shuju, 2015)