



# Radio language: Presenting

Radio must be considered mass media, but the presenter must see it as talking to just one person, and ensuring that whoever that person is, they should be able to understand what you are talking about.

The presenter guides the listeners through the radio show. The texts that the presenter reads out on the microphone are often called "links". The presenter does the following:

- Provides an overview and orientation for the listeners.
- Arouses interest in the show's items by using appealing links.
- Accompanies the listeners through the programme, highlighting the central thread. This includes creating transitions between different parts of the programme.
- Shapes the style and atmosphere of the show with their personality.

## **Presentation technique: keyword script.**

Even more so than other radio texts, it is important that links sound as if they were spoken freely, rather than "read out". However, not everything is as it seems: good links are very rarely spontaneous improvisations. On the contrary: links need to be well prepared in order to have exactly the desired effect and to avoid unnecessary filler words and empty phrases.

The presenter can write down the whole text and mark the most important words with a highlighter. They can also use a keyword script. In addition to nouns, primarily verbs and adjectives are suitable as keywords. The presenter should not use any texts from the Internet or newspapers without rewriting them in their own words. They should also avoid using words that they are not familiar with. Both come across as unnatural and often incomprehensible.

Every presenter's script looks somewhat different. All presenters should try out different forms and find the one that suits them best.

The rate of delivery depends on the style of the station, the material broadcast and the conversational speed of the presenter. Everyone has their own rate and style, and the only way to polish it is recording your programmes and analyse and perfect your style.

## **Speaking into the microphone**

**Attitude of speech.** Whether listeners feel as if they are being spoken to depends greatly on the so-called "attitude of speech". The listener can sense whether the presenter really is addressing the audience, or just delivering a monologue. The difficulty is that the presenter usually sits alone in the broadcast studio and cannot see the large number of listeners whom they want to talk to.

For this reason, one simple rule is to imagine the listeners in the studio. If the presenter talks to a real person, the expression and tone of their voice changes. One little trick: it helps to put a soft toy or a photo on the mixing desk, so as to have an "audience" right there to talk to.

There are many ways to address the listener: reading out, calling out, telling, commenting, reciting, stating, quoting, describing, narrating, relaying, reporting, imparting, informing, explaining, announcing, declaring etc. The presenter has to consider which attitude to adopt as a speaker.

In the actual reading, your eyes need to move ahead of the script, to prepare for playing the audio insert. If you stumble over a word, don't try to say it again as it will only bring attention to the mistake. Train yourself to ignore it, to ensure that it does not affect the delivery of the rest of the programme.

**Speaking, thinking and feeling form a unified whole.** Only those who think along and understand what they are saying, only those who envisage what they are telling, only those who put their thoughts and feelings into the text can also convey the text vocally and orally. In other words: **If it is not in the speaker's head and insides, it is not in their voice either.**

### **Technical notes on speaking into the microphone**

- The distance between microphone and mouth should be around one hand's width.
- If possible, the microphone should be above the mouth, so that pop sounds and sibilant sounds pass beneath it.
- Sit upright at the microphone, place both feet firmly on the floor and breathe in calmly and deeply. Your voice will then sound fuller and warmer and your vocal chords will not be strained.
- Always wear headphones. Only then will you be able to hear unwanted background noise (paper rustling, nervous pen clicking) and to mix your voice with a musical backdrop correctly.
- Concentrate on the script.
- If you have a slip of the tongue, pause briefly, breathe in deeply once again (but do not breathe out into the microphone!), concentrate again and repeat the last sentence from the beginning. Do not apologise. The listeners will quickly forget the little mistake.

- If there is a technical glitch, apologise and resort to one of the usual apology phrases. I.e. "We apologise for the technical glitch and we'll be back to that story later in the bulletin."

### **Notes on Preparation**

- It is crucial that the presenter reads the stories to get an overall understanding and check the pronunciations and names right. If there is enough time, read the bulletin aloud at least once before going on air.
- Once you are on air, you need to be focused on the text and on driving the desk, making sure that the correct audios are being played.
- Good Planning is the key to hosting a successful music programme. If well prepared, the show should run smoothly. If you try to pick up music items in the last minute, the result will be disappointing for you and frustrating for the presenter.
- Specialist music programmes appeal to listeners who are fans of a particular type of music, and probably these listeners would not as much as –if not more than– the presenter. This is why the key to a successful music programme is preparation, preparation, preparation! If a listener corrects you on something that you have said on air, take it graciously, check it out yourself
- Listen to all the music beforehand, and prepare well your intros, adding relevant historical information about the time of the release of the track if relevant. Try to find other angles to introduce your music.
- Listen to the final broadcast too, to catch any errors, and be prepared to correct yourself if you make a mistake.

### **Sources**

RAWIK Radio Aus- und Weiterbildung im Interkulturellen Kontext Interaudio (2007). Materialien für die interkulturelle Radioausbildung. Antje Schwarzmeier and Ulrike Werner. Hessische Landesanstalt für privaten Rundfunk (LPR Hessen).

klipp+klang radio school (2008). Merkheft für die radiojournalistische Grundausbildung. Radio RaBe Programme Committee (2008). Mehrsprachige Sendungsgestaltung. Empfehlungen der Programmkommission (PK).

Inter.Media "Intercultural Media Training in Europe. Handbook for community media trainers and editors. kopaed, Munich (2006).

Course documents for basic courses (2001) by Bianca Miglioretto (unpublished)

Basic Training notes from Near FM.