



SPEECHES

CHAPTER A6

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Introduction

This chapter seeks to explain the basic idea of giving speeches in Model UN. It will explore methods on how to effectively structure a speech. It will also explore the more meta aspect of speeches that relates to the strategic aspects of giving speeches in Model UN.

Understanding Model UN Speeches

Speeches in Model UN are extremely challenging and difficult, especially at the more advanced level. The reason for this challenge is the limited time frame you have to present your argument. Maximum speech time usually spans 1 to 2 minutes maximum. Therefore, there is only a limited amount of time to make your argument and answer questions.

But more importantly, there is no assurance that you would be able to give a speech whenever you want since the chairs decide who gets to speak. Therefore, the method you position yourself in the council will increase your chances of being selected to speak.

Let's focus on the structural aspects of this first.

Structure

The simplest structure is the PEEL structure

- Point
- Explain
- Evidence
- Link

We'll go through each one specifically to understand its purpose and how you can utilise it to make a good speech.

Point

Remember, your speech is only 1 to 2 minutes max. Hence, it is always advisable to only have one point in your speech, which allows you to elaborate on the ideas clearly. Referring back to Chapter A4 Research, perhaps you are looking to elaborate on a specific cause of the issue, or trying to propose a specific solution. You should decide on what this point is before you give your speech.

Having decided on this point, you'll start your speech with what I'd like to call a *thesis statement*. An effective thesis statement can summarise your entire speech so the audience knows exactly what to expect in the next minute or two. For example:



The delegate of Australia proposes the increased implementation of animal conservation programs rather than putting efforts into environmental conservation.

The statement is clear on what we are to expect and it is concise. It explains what policy the delegate supports, and the alternative that it is unwilling to advocate for. Your thesis statement should not take you any longer than 10 seconds.

Explain

This is where most people, if not everyone, fail at. There is no fixed structure to how to explain something, but there are things you should try to achieve when explaining something.

Why is it believable

Recall Chapter A5 when we introduced the concept of principles. Explain which principle is aligned with the point you are trying to make. Using the same Australian example:

The delegate of Australia believes that the prevention of animal extinction should be the priority of the council.

Everyone agrees that animal extinction should be prevented, and it is a principle that everyone can be united upon. Since you have established a principle basis that people believe in, you can now explain why this principle can be better achieved with your idea.

Through animal conservation programs, we can better monitor the health of the animals and provide the adequate care that is required. It will also prevent animals from being hunted down by poachers.

Impact

Impact is a concept that is rather weird to explain, since it relies on inferences on what would occur as a result of certain actions. But the best arguments often illustrate the impacts of their policy, and what will change.

The best way to think of impacts is through stakeholder analysis. How will each group be affected as a result of the decisions we make? When we can explain the positive results that will materialise as a result of the policy, people are more likely to support it. For example - with better microfinancing policies, farmers working low cost labour will be better able to industrialize their production lines to increase their crop yield, allowing them to live at better living standards and improve the economy as a whole.



This makes the argument sound much more convincing, as voting against the microfinancing policy would now make you seem like someone that does not want the farmers to achieve better living standards or improve the economy.

Refutation

Because you will not be getting an opportunity to give another speech in a while, it becomes crucial that you are able to refute any possible arguments that go against your policy. A common method is to be your own devil's advocate and consider the possible reasons why someone would disagree with you. It is usually either of the two reasons:

1. There is a principle disagreement

This relates back to the idea of stances, where certain policies are considered as “deal-breakers” for certain delegates. To win an argument against someone that disagrees with you from a principle standpoint requires you to explain the importance of your own principle in relation to theirs. Therefore, in your explanation, you need to weigh out both clashing principles.

For example - the reason why someone would prefer the alternative of environmental conservation instead of animal conservation is because they believe in the principle of freedom for these animals, and that they do not deserve to be trapped in an animal conservation camp. Hence, you might have to explain why the survival of a species is more important than their freedom.

Alternatively, you can also seek to find compromises or add additional nuance into your policies so that it becomes more acceptable by the other delegates. This is because in a speech, there is insufficient time for you to flesh out the specifics of how you want to implement your policy, but you can flag out certain key parts to illustrate how you can accommodate other views.

2. There is an alternative

Although we are all trying to attain the same goal, the methods of which to attain it can vary. For example, though there is a principle agreement that we all need to reduce carbon dioxide emissions, there is a clash in principle on whether carbon tax or carbon cap and trade systems are more efficient when it comes to this method.

You should consider the alternative aspects of your speech. What other causes could people refer to, what other solutions are there? Provide reasoning on how you decided that your policy is better than the others - **what makes this policy unique.**



During your explanation, it can be beneficial to refer to what other delegates said. More often or not, you do not have to play devil's advocate to figure out the other alternatives and stances, as someone has already mentioned. By directly referencing other delegates' speeches, it shows that you are interacting and responding to what other delegates have said.

But it is also crucial to know what has been said in the council. You are always trying to add something substantive into the debate. This means that even if you want to reference a policy that has already been discussed and support it, you should try to add new arguments and reasoning to why it should be supported. It is not sufficient to merely "echo the sentiments" of a previous delegate.

Evidence

In A4 Research, when creating your research folder, it was recommended that you have a list of the past precedences and statistics. This is where that information can come into use. A good speech utilises evidence to back up their policies and arguments. However, how a delegate uses their evidence distinguishes an average delegate from a top delegate.

So what is evidence for? The goal of providing evidence is to build credibility in your speech. The way it does so is by referencing past precedents, especially successful ones, you can show that the ideas that you are proposing are realistic and feasible, and that other delegates have previously supported it.

Therefore, when providing evidence, it is important to explain the significance of the evidence provided. Why do we need to know that the Earth will be inhabitable by 2050 if we take no action? Why is the Geneva Convention important? Explicitly reference that delegates have previously supported such actions, and it is in line with UN values and the work that the UN has been doing.

Link

There is only one goal when trying to conclude - which is to link everything back to the original topic of the council. What is the significance of this speech? Why does this relate to the topic? It requires you to relate back to the previous section of [impacts](#).

However, the important part that delegates tend to leave out is - what do we do after the speech? It is always beneficial to state the next steps you would take to implement your solution. Are you hoping for further discussion to gather general ideas on the issue? Are you going to raise an amendment soon? Do you want delegates to send you notes on fleshing out the ideas on a working paper? Make it clear on how delegates who are interested can support your ideas.



Yielding

Yielding is fairly simple in relation to speeches. If you have time, always yield to points of information. By time, I mean at least 15 seconds. Being able to answer questions and interact with delegates can always show that you are furthering debate. This will become clearer in the [meta-speeches](#) section.

Rhetoric

What you say matters just as much as how you say it. Structure can provide a concise manner to follow the flow of your speech, but rhetorical skills are just as important to convey your point across. Rhetoric is not something that develops overnight, but there are certain techniques you can use to improve your rhetoric.

Accents

It is not fair for a chair to penalise you for having an accent. However, it is not the fault of the chair nor the fault of the delegates if they are unable to understand what you are saying due to your accent. There are measures you can take to neutralise your accent.

If you are aware that you have an accent, it is best to ensure that you are able to enunciate each word as you are giving your speech. Try to speak slower to make sure each one of your words are pronounced. Speaking slower also allows delegates to have more time to understand what you are attempting to convey.

Eye Contact

Look around the room as you give a speech. Especially in a council where you can speak directly from your seats and not from the front, make sure you are rotating your body to ensure that people behind you can see you as you give your speech.

The mistake the beginner delegates always make is they tend to write whole speeches on paper or computer and read it out directly from their screen. In terms of optics, this is already considered bad. But when you speak into a computer, you become less audible as the sound is not travelling towards the audience. Hence, whenever you write speeches, you should write in a bullet point form. Avoid having lengthy paragraphs and have key points that you can elaborate as you give your speech.

Body Language

There are tons of things to be aware of when it comes to body language, but there are two that can easily be corrected and are often overlooked.



Posture

When giving your speech, ensure you stand upright. Try your best not to slouch.

Hand Movements

Try your best to not make any unnecessary hand movements. An easy way to deal with this is to hold something. Some delegates hold their placards when they give their speeches, some might hold their notes.

Fillers

It is not uncommon that an impromptu speech often contains filler words. Filler words are words that we use when we are unable to think of what to say next, and so we resort to those words to buy up time. Usually, it does not matter. However, when repeated again and again, it becomes annoying to the audience.

The first thing you need to do is find your filler. Ask your friend to listen to your speeches, as the audience tends to be better at identifying fillers. These tend to be very subtle terms like “furthermore” or “that is to say”. Once you become self conscious of the fillers you use, you can then better avoid them during your speech. If you come across an instance where you stumble upon your own words and struggle to think of what to say next, don’t use a filler, just pause, and continue.

Meta-Speeches

You might be familiar with the concept of “meta-gaming”, with meta standing for the most efficient tactic available. There is a level of strategy you can implement into Model UN speeches. But to understand how to utilise such strategies, you first have to understand the chair delegate selection process.

How do chairs choose delegates to speak?

Assuming you have a rational and fair chair, the chair’s decision on speaking order is based on two simple metrics.

The first is who has spoken least. If two delegates raise their placard up and one of them has been speaking a lot whilst the other has only spoken once, the individual who has spoken less would be selected.

The second is who is more relevant. If two delegates have been equally active, the decision then comes to who will be more relevant in the topic. For example, if the topic was on the South China Sea conflict, the delegate of China will be recognised over the delegate of Brazil because China has a higher relevance in regards to the ongoing discussion.



General Speakers List

In a HMUN council when there is a General Speakers List, it is always recommended to add yourself into the list whenever you have the chance. The reason why the GSL is so beneficial is because it is one of the only methods where you have agency over when you get to speak. The chair cannot deny you from adding yourself into the GSL.

That being said, it is crucial that whenever you are in the GSL you give relevant speeches. Because as you give more speeches, your chances of being selected to speak in times like amendments or moderated caucuses significantly decreases. Therefore, the speeches you would need to give should be speeches that will give you an increase in relevance during the council. What do I mean by this?

If you give an impactful speech about why there is an issue with the gender wage gap and how you believe corporate transparency can improve the situation; when there is a moderated caucus about such an issue, the chairs will view you as a relevant stakeholder in the discussion, and will feel the need to include you in the discussion later onwards. By increasing your “relevance”, you increase the chances for more speeches.

Another strategy is related to the [link](#) in your speeches. If you have made it clear that you wish to submit an amendment in the future to address the issue, or that you will call for a moderated caucus for further discussion, the chairs will be on the lookout for your motions as a means to further debate. Therefore, by making your intentions clear to the chairs, it allows you to increase your relevance in the council.

Therefore, it is always important to reference other delegates in your speeches or yield yourself to POIs, as these interactions will increase your relevance.

Moderated Caucus

Hosting a moderated caucus

If you were the delegate that motioned for a moderated caucus, then you will face the lifelong dilemma of “would the delegate like to speak first or last”. The way to decide is extremely simple, and the wrong decision can actually bring harm.

If the moderated caucus you called for was to spark discussion on a problem and look for possible solutions, you should always seek to speak first to clearly define the parameters of discussions and illustrate the problem the council is trying to solve. This helps set the narrative of the debate, as delegates will know what exactly they are trying to address.



If the moderated caucus you called for was to discuss a policy you suggested, for example an amendment or a working paper. It is always better to speak last. This is because you can respond to the criticisms and the critique that delegates might have for you.

Speaking in a moderated caucus

Speaking in a moderated caucus is a method of strategy that is similar to hosting a moderated caucus. In most situations, the “first batch” of delegates chosen will not fill the whole moderated caucus. However, it is crucial to know that it is very rare that you get an opportunity to speak twice during a moderated caucus. Hence, you should strategize on how you want to position yourself in the moderated caucus.

Remember that sometimes it is also strategic to withdraw yourself from a moderated caucus. If the topic is something you are not familiar with, you should not participate in it. This is so you can ensure that your speeches can continue being significant and relevant.