
Splendid Speaking Podcasts



Topic: Structuring a Short Talk
(Interview 7: November Archives)

This show can be listened to at the following address:

<http://splendid-speaking.com/blog/?p=37>



Comprehension Questions

As you listen, decide if the following questions are true according to what Alejandro says.

- 1) He is aware of how important technology is.
- 2) He thinks most technological developments are fads and will go out of fashion.
- 3) He uses the Internet for his job.
- 4) He uses a webcam for some of his conversations.
- 5) He speaks with his family using a traditional telephone.

Transcript

Introduction

Welcome to the Splendid Speaking podcast. My name's Pete Travis and this week we're listening to Alejandro from Argentina who's preparing for the Cambridge CAE exam and spoke to me from Mexico. A reminder that transcripts for all podcasts including this one are available to subscribers of our mailing list. You can sign up to the newsletter from www.splendid-speaking.com.

If you're looking for tips on how to structure a short presentation then you may well find this recording useful. Shortly before the interview in Skype I sent Alejandro the following question:

“Talk about a technology you use that you couldn't do without.”

We all know the importance of including an introduction and a conclusion in a presentation we give. It can also be very effective to link these two sections of your talk by referring back in the conclusion to a point you raised in the introduction. For example, imagine you're giving a talk about the importance of keeping fit and you decide to start your talk with some attention-grabbing statistics on the health of the nation to set the scene. After delivering the main body of your talk you could then refer to these statistics again in your conclusion, with perhaps something on the lines of: 'So, if you don't want to be a statistic then you should think about'. As you listen to Alejandro, note the issue he uses to do this. Also make a note of expressions you hear throughout the talk which act as 'signposts', steering you through his presentation. If you have access to the transcript, listen a second time and answer the comprehension questions. Finally, make a note of Alejandro's use of English, which we'll look at in the feedback session.

Let's listen to Alejandro. Apologies for the quality of the recording in places

... Well to me I think there is ... there isn't a technology that I couldn't do without. Generally speaking ... I ... I'm aware of the advances and the improvement that technology has had ... but ... I know how important technology is but I'm not ... I'm not a person who is behind the latest technology or the most fashionable technology. That is why I really don't care about technology. However ... as far as I'm concerned, computers are ... very important tools or the computer is a very important tool for me ... due to the fact that I ... I can ... have an access to the Internet and the Internet is also a very useful ... tool for me and this is for ... this is for many reasons. On the one hand because I ... I use it a lot to work because I can get ... a lot of information, instant information maybe that you need at the moment and that it's ... it makes my job easier sometimes. And on the other hand as I ... as I live far from my family I ... we can get ... we can connect through the Internet ... what I mean is that we ... we chat ... we frequently chat and we can see each other through the ... through the webcam or even I can make telephone calls to them through the Internet ... so that is why ... although I'm not very ... in close contact with technology or I don't care about ... care about ... technology I think it is ... it is very important ... for me not only for me for ... for many people and for many things.

Feedback

First of all, thanks to Alejandro for taking part in this Skype interview and for agreeing to be recorded. If you go to the Splendid Speaking website you can leave your own comments on his presentation.

Now for some feedback. There were some excellent examples of how to deliver a short presentation in this recording. To begin with there was the way in which Alejandro concluded his talk by returning to the theme he'd developed in his introduction. He started by telling us about his attitude towards technology and then began his conclusion by saying:

“...so that is why ... although I'm not very... in close contact with technology or I don't care about ... care about ... technology I think it is ... it is very important...”

This is an excellent technique for two reasons. On the one hand, as we looked earlier, it makes the presentation feel very neat and tidy, supporting the main content with the theme of Alejandro's attitude towards technology at the beginning and end of the talk. Returning to the theme in this way also highlights to the listener that the talk is coming to an end and prepares us for the conclusion.

Alejandro's use of signposting expressions was another of the strong points of this talk. These can sometimes be overused and can sound rather false. However, Alejandro managed to use the following very naturally. The key words are underlined in the transcript:

“... Generally speaking ... I ... I'm aware of the advances and the improvement that technology...”

“... as far as I'm concerned, computers are ... very important tools or the computer is a very important tool for me...”

“... due to the fact that I ... I can ... have an access to the Internet...”

“...and the Internet is also a very useful ... tool for me and this is for ... this is for many reasons...”

“... On the one hand because I ... I use it a lot to work...”

“... And on the other hand as I ... as I live far from my family I ... we can get ... we can connect through the internet...”

In general, Alejandro's English was of a good standard. There were occasions in the presentation where there were short hesitations while he was thinking of how to express himself and he'll no doubt benefit from practising long turns like this as often as possible. Alejandro had clear pronunciation and accurate use of English only making a few mistakes. Can you spot the errors here?

“...I’m not a person who is behind the latest technology...”

“...I can ... have an access to the Internet...”

“...instant information maybe that you need at the moment...”

“...even I can make telephone calls to them...”

So, did you spot the mistakes?

“...I’m not a person who is behind the latest technology...”

A better word than ‘behind’ would be ‘up-to-date with’.

“...I can ... have an access to the Internet...”

We don’t use an article with access so would say ‘have access to the Internet’.

“...instant information maybe that you need at the moment...”

This is a pronunciation issue and relates to the problem some Spanish speakers have with the pronunciation of the sound /y/. Here clearly it was pronounced ‘jou’ rather than ‘you’.

“...even I can make telephone calls to them...”

There are two issues here. Firstly word order. It should be ‘I can even make’. And the pronunciation of telephone calls with the ‘s’ on ‘calls’ not ‘telephone’.

OK. That's the end of this podcast. Once again, many thanks to Alejandro. Until next week it's 'Bye' from me Pete Travis. And remember that you can download the transcript to this and all previous podcasts by signing up to the Splendid Speaking newsletter, a link to which you'll find at www.splendid-speaking.com

Answers to Comprehension Questions

1) He is aware of how important technology is.

Ans: True

2) He thinks most technological developments are fads and will go out of fashion.

Ans: False

3) He uses the Internet for his job.

Ans: True

4) He uses a webcam for some of his conversations.

Ans: True

5) He speaks with his family using a traditional telephone.
Ans: False

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